

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Monday, February 7, 2011 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order. We will proceed at this time with prayers.

*Prayers*

**DAILY ROUTINE**

**Speaker:** We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

Introduction of visitors.

Returns or documents for tabling.

Are there any reports of committees?

Are there any petitions?

Any bills to be introduced?

Any notices of motion?

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT Craig Tuton, chair of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, Joe MacGillivray, chief executive officer of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, and Kelly Steele, chief financial officer of the Yukon Hospital Corporation, appear as witnesses before Committee of the Whole from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February, 15, 2011, to discuss matters relating to the Yukon Hospital Corporation.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT Ray Hayes, chair of the Yukon Development Corporation Board of Directors, Piers McDonald, chair of the Yukon Energy Corporation, and David Morrison, chief executive officer of the Yukon Development Corporation and president and chief executive officer of the Yukon Energy Corporation, appear as witnesses in Committee of the Whole from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 17, 2011 to discuss matters relating to the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation.

**Mr. Nordick:** I rise today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the governments of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut to work together in providing more post-secondary education/university programming in the north.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to work with the Klondike Placer Miners Association, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government and Parks Canada to establish a palaeontology presence in Dawson City and display palaeontology artifacts discovered by placer mining operations in the Klondike goldfields.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I give notice of the following motion:  
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to reverse its decision to delay funding for the construction of the new F.H. Collins school in 2011-12 and to keep the promise that it made three months ago in terms of the funding and construction schedule for this project.

**Mr. Inverarity:** I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to petition the Government of Canada to ensure that the CRTC reverses its ruling on charging for bandwidth and that the CRTC commit to a deregulated Internet environment for all of Canada.

**Ms. Hanson:** I give notice of the following motion:  
THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to use all of its diplomatic influence with Egyptian authorities in order to:

- (1) seek an immediate start to political reforms;
- (2) avoid further violence and conflict; and
- (3) support the Egyptian people's call for democracy, economic fairness, the protection of human rights, and an end to corruption.

**Mr. Cathers:** I rise today to give notice of the following motion:

THAT it is the opinion of this House that the Yukon's low royalty rates for placer mining and quartz mining are a major factor in encouraging investment and economic activity.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motion?  
Is there a statement by a minister?  
Hearing none, this brings us to Question Period.

**QUESTION PERIOD**

**Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School reconstruction**

**Mr. Fairclough:** On October 26 and 28 of this past fall, the Minister of Education spoke a great deal about the plan for the new F.H. Collins school. The minister told us that \$24.4 million was expected to be allocated for this project in the 2011-12 budget, but the budget clearly shows that only \$2.7 million is being allocated for the new school in the upcoming year.

This is a huge discrepancy. This means the construction of the school will be pushed back for at least a full year. I think Yukoners want to know why this Yukon Party government is telling them one thing and doing another. The minister promised the construction of F.H. Collins school this year, but it's not going forward as planned. So on behalf of Yukoners, I'd like to ask the minister why.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The Yukon Party government certainly takes the issue of education very seriously, not only here in Whitehorse but throughout the territory. That's why we have built schools. The member opposite is aware of the one that was built in his riding. We have gone to work with the community on the replacement of F.H. Collins, which we have recog-

nized as an important project. We've done our homework on this project, Mr. Speaker, by looking at the facilities that we have throughout Whitehorse through a secondary school programming review and working with the building advisory committee.

The work and the design is still not at the tenderable stage. Unfortunately, there have been some delays with that process, but I can assure the member opposite the process is ensuring that we have a facility that will meet the needs of Yukoners for decades to come.

We've had many discussions in here about ensuring that we have appropriate heating types of plants in there and these ideas are being incorporated and we're coming forward with the budget, which will see work at the F.H. Collins site this summer. There's site preparation work that we'll need to do. The Government of Yukon is fully committed to replacing F.H. Collins. I look forward to budget debate where we can go into all the details regarding these expenditures.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Sounds like excuses to me. Three months ago, the Minister of Education told this House that \$24.4 million would be allocated for the new F.H. Collins school — and I quote: "... certainly demonstrates the commitment that this government has put into this type of project, the level of planning that is in place, the level of ensuring that these projects are planned well in advance and properly accounted for and budgeted for in our outgoing years," end quote. Now it would seem that a much smaller dollar amount demonstrates the kind of commitment that this Yukon Party is willing to make. Like many government commitments, it's long on promises and short on delivery. Just three months ago, this minister was very keen on this project.

So why has he decided to drastically scale back the funding for it in this year's budget?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I see the opposition does recognize that there is funding in the budget to go ahead with this project. The government is committed to replacing F.H. Collins. That's why we have done our homework. That's why we are in the planning stages. That's why we are listening to the advice coming from the member opposite who has wanted us to take additional looks at things like the ground source heat pump. We also recognize that the economy is very hot in the territory, and that our construction workers are working on a number of different projects, not only in Whitehorse, but throughout many of the communities. We have heard from the contracting association that we also need to work to ensure that we have long-term, sustainable projects.

We have made a commitment to replace F.H. Collins; we are living up to it; we are listening to the building advisory committee. It's unfortunate that the designing process is taking longer, but I believe that because of that we'll end up with a better project in the end.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Well, we are hearing more excuses from the minister. He did promise \$24.4 million would be in the budget, and it is not there, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a moment to commend the hard work that the F. H. Collins school advisory council has put into planning of the new F.H. Collins school, and it is exciting when the community comes

together and creates something that will benefit the future of all Yukoners for generations to come.

Clearly, the members of the F.H. Collins advisory council are dedicated to this cause and it's too bad that the Yukon Party government doesn't feel the same way, Mr. Speaker.

With all the hard work that the members of the advisory council have put into this project, did the minister inform them about these delays before last week?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** The Government of Yukon is committed to replacing F.H. Collins. We're committed to working with our teachers, with our students, with educators, and with people in the construction and design committee to ensure that we have the best product possible that will meet the needs of Yukon students for decades to come.

The contribution in this year's budget will continue with the design planning and see some of the site work. The project has already received the implementation phase and has gone through the Cabinet and Management Board process, and under the proposed extended schedule, the construction of the new school will be tendered in January 2012. This will allow us to have an occupancy date of August 2013.

We want to ensure that the school is built on time, so that we don't have to see a transition of going for a couple of months in one school and a couple of months in another school. The members opposite have also cautioned me about building while people are attending the school. These are all characteristics that are taken into consideration in the timing of this project.

#### **Question re: *Environment Act* audit**

**Mr. Elias:** In September 2010, an internal audit was completed on the Yukon government's performance under the *Environment Act*, yet the Environment minister chose to wait until the last day of the fall sitting in November to actually table the report. Why, Mr. Speaker? I think it's because the minister didn't want to deal with all the bad news on the floor of the House.

The internal audit was clear; it said that there are unresolved deficiencies that get in the way of efficiency and fairness in the *Environment Act*. It said that the government was not performing within a tolerable standard of efficiency, accuracy, consistency, and completeness in the *Environment Act*.

Can the Minister of Environment explain why his government can't uphold its basic environmental responsibilities to Yukoners under the *Environment Act*?

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite is kind of exaggerating this whole thing a little bit here. The *Environment Act* audit is a requirement under section 39 of the act and must take place every three years.

The Yukon government recognizes the importance of the audit, and it not only ensures the programs under the *Environment Act* are delivered effectively but it also identifies areas in which the *Environment Act* and its programs can be improved.

#### **Speaker's statement**

**Speaker:** Before the honourable member asks his next question, minister, you used the term "exaggerating". We must presume that everyone in this House is speaking with their best intentions, so a term like "exaggerating", although not out of

order, is on the edge and will lead to more discord. So honourable member, just don't use that terminology.

First supplementary, please, Member for Vuntut Gwitchin.

**Mr. Elias:** In simple terms, there's a consistent lack of leadership on the environmental front from this Yukon Party government. The audit drew attention to eight key areas of concern; five of those warnings came from 2008; three more carried forward all the way from 2005.

To go over it in simple terms, the audit said that the Department of Environment should ensure it meets its legislative timelines, like delivering the state of the environment report on time. It should conduct a review of the *Environment Act*, in light of substantial governance changes since 1991; review its policy for designated contaminated sites; administer better the issuance and monitoring of storage tank permits to ensure compliance; and demonstrate that conservation is part of the department's purchasing policies.

When is the minister going to provide the necessary leadership and direction to review our *Environment Act* in its entirety?

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite only needs to look among his colleagues — one of them sitting beside him over there never even tabled a report, period, when that individual was a minister.

The audit did not make any new recommendations about the Yukon government's performances for the three-year period from October 1, 2006, to September 30, 2009. The audit provided the status of previous audit recommendations and identified concerns about how regulations were administered across the departments of Environment Yukon, Energy, Mines and Resources and Community Services. That was what the audit covered.

**Mr. Elias:** Mr. Speaker, through the Yukon Party's entire term, they did not give one iota of direction to the department to have a clear and concise look at the *Environment Act* so that it can be brought up to today's standards. The *Environment Act* is in place to ensure that our lands, our waters, and our wildlife remain healthy and vibrant for future generations.

The minister is charged with upholding and defending this essential piece of legislation. The minister has an obligation to keep the public informed so that Yukoners can be allowed to monitor the government's environmental progress, yet this government keeps Yukoners in the dark — year after year after year. The *Environment Act* says that the people of the Yukon have the right to a healthy, natural environment. The Yukon Party ignored these serious issues in 2005. They ignored them again in 2008.

Does the Minister of Environment intend to ignore them again in 2011?

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe all members of the opposition just fail to and don't want to recognize the progress of this Yukon Party with regard to environment and I guess I can probably understand why — because the accomplishments have been substantial. For example, since the Yukon Party has been in office since 2002, our government has added a large number of protected areas. These include the

Tombstone Territorial Park established in 2004; Old Crow Flats east and west special management areas established in 2006; Lhutsaw Wetland Habitat Protection Area established in 2007; Fishing Branch Wilderness Preserve established in 2003; Nordenskiöld Wetland habitat protection plan established in 2010; the Asi Keyi Natural Environment Park, identified in 2003; Fishing Branch Ecological Reserve, established in 2003; Kusawa Natural Environment Park, identified in 2005; Pickhandle Lake Habitat Protection Area, identified in 2003 — and the list goes on. This government has done a lot with regard to the environment and its protection. Thank you.

#### Question re: Policing council

**Mr. Cardiff:** The Minister of Justice received a policing review called "Sharing Common Ground", and has promised to implement the recommendations in it as quickly as possible. She has indicated that establishing the recommended police council is one of the most immediate actions to be taken. It will soon be weeks since the report was made public and no doubt the minister knew most of the recommendations long before they were made public. It's kind of interesting. I'd like the minister to point out, maybe, where the resources are for implementation of some of the recommendations and for the council, and can she give us an update on how far along the work has progressed on establishing the new policing council?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I would like to mention to the members opposite that this police review was very, very extensive. We wanted the review to be more than just particular incidents; we wanted the review to look at systemic change within our police force.

We extended the time on the policing review, because there was so much interest shown by the public. The commanding officer of M Division is working with us, in partnership, and the CYFN is also working very closely with us in partnership. I am so pleased with the work that has gone on up to this date.

The next step we will be taking is meeting with the chiefs of all the First Nations in Yukon, and that will be happening next week, as per the recommendations in the review.

**Mr. Cardiff:** The review came about because of more than one tragedy that saw the death of people while in custody of the RCMP. Nothing could be more serious, in our view and in the view of many Yukoners. I've heard Yukoners, and they're asking over and over again for an effective complaints process. They're telling me they want investigations that are independent of the RCMP and of the government.

Instead, the minister wants this council to be chaired in house by her deputy, and the council would receive reports on complaints but it doesn't receive the complaints themselves. Instead of that, they still go to the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP. This council has no investigative powers, has no enforcement powers, it cannot hold an inquiry and it's not even established by legislation. Will the minister explain how the police council serves to improve policing in the territory over what is currently the case?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I would remind the member opposite that it was this government that initiated this review in the first place. The safety of Yukoners is utmost in the mind of the

Justice department. As I said, we wanted this to be more inclusive of just particular incidents; we want to make sure that our policing in the Yukon is what Yukoners want. We have the recommendations from the committee and we are working very closely with them. Let's not jump the gun here and come to the conclusion that it is not working.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Mr. Speaker, for many years I've advocated in this Legislative Assembly for establishing an actual police commission in this territory. In the provinces, a civilian police commission investigates complaints. It holds hearings; it takes appeals from police disciplinary hearings; it rules on whether or not standards of police services are being met. In other words, police commissions actually have some teeth. The proposed police council for Yukon does none of these things. It simply makes written recommendations to the minister and the commanding officer on a list of vague issues.

The Yukon public and my constituents are telling me that a commission model with some teeth is the way to go. Will the Minister of Justice make the changes the public deserves and demands and establish a police commission that will actually have some power to improve policing in the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Déjà vu — we're already criticizing what is being done in the review. We have to demonstrate that what we have done will ensure positive results for policing in the Yukon. This policing review is about a real opportunity to build a stronger relationship with the public, and that is exactly what we're doing. We're working with the First Nation communities, we're working with the RCMP and the Yukon government, and we will make positive change in Yukon.

Let's wait to see what the implementation committee comes up with.

As I said of my first meeting with the chiefs of Yukon — and that will be held on Friday — I look forward to that meeting to hear their views.

#### **Question re: Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk, Task Force report on**

**Ms. Hanson:** We commend the Minister of Health and Social Services for creating the Task Force on Acutely Intoxicated Persons at Risk. It was long overdue. Great credit is due to the authors of this report, Dr. Beaton and Chief Allen. The task force report was clear. We simply cannot rely on some of our current practices to provide appropriate care for severely intoxicated people. It is very disappointing, however, to see that the minister has overshot the responsibility of this task force by predetermining the government's response to the problem. The decision to spend \$3.5 million on a sobering centre at the jail was made long before the task force even submitted its report. The money was already in the budget. The Task Force on Severely Intoxicated Persons at Risk did not recommend a sobering centre at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

Why did the minister create a task force to make recommendations to government when he and his colleague, the Minister of Justice, had already decided what they were going to do?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** For the member opposite, the task force was mandated to advise the Minister of Health and Social Services on options and priorities for the actions to take the

most effective and appropriate way to deal with those acutely intoxicated persons at risk of harming themselves and others throughout the Yukon. The Yukon government has received this task force and now we are working with our partners, with the stakeholders, to build an implementation of a plan to address the recommendations put forth by the task force.

I would also like to advise the member opposite that the co-chairs were adamantly involved with the Justice department in the workings of the police report, as well as the dealings of the secure intoxicated facility.

**Ms. Hanson:** Neither the policing review nor the task force recommended a continuing strong role for law enforcement officers in detaining and transporting intoxicated people to and from a sobering centre. In fact, the recommendations were for a greatly reduced role for the RCMP and an expanded role for outreach caregivers in interacting with acutely intoxicated persons. It said a sobering centre should be located in the downtown core, close to a medical detox and a shelter. It identified the continuum of programs and services these people require if we are actually serious about including all people with compassion, respect and dignity. Being intoxicated is not a crime. This is not the first time the government has opened a dialogue with the Yukon public and then totally ignored their recommendations.

When will the minister implement the excellent recommendations of the task force on acutely intoxicated persons, which were made in good faith?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** First of all, I'd like to express my sincere appreciation to the co-chairs for the work they did and the work they compiled, going out and visiting the facilities outside the Yukon, making those recommendations — recommendations, I might add, to myself. I'd also like to advise that they did bring the report in on time at the end of last year. We are in the process, as I said earlier, of working with our stakeholders to look at the recommendations and how we can bring forth those recommendations in the immediate process, as well as those in the long term, and we plan to do so.

**Ms. Hanson:** The task force said the Health department must work with Whitehorse General Hospital to alleviate the staffing and physical resource crisis of care in the emergency department. It says the current situation at the hospital is a crisis waiting to happen. It endangers the acutely intoxicated, the staff and even other patients. It also says that no member of the Whitehorse General Hospital has expertise in addiction medicine. The task force called for urgent action, and so has the Yukon Medical Association.

What action is the government taking to reduce the potential for serious injury or death involving interaction with acutely intoxicated persons at the Whitehorse General Hospital?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** I'm fully aware of the recommendations put forth in the report by the co-chairs with regard to the situation here at the Whitehorse General Hospital. We, along with the Department of Justice, are working on the situation to ensure that we are not sending all of the individuals over to Whitehorse General Hospital. We have a system in place that will ensure that these clients are being cared for. The intent of

the secure facility at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre is to ensure that they will receive medical attention.

**Question re: Fiscal management**

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, trust is based on past performance. Trust is based on delivering what you promise. It's based on results. That's why this budget is unbelievable. It's unbelievable because the Premier can't deliver on what he promises — a surplus.

Last spring, he promised a surplus and delivered a \$20-million deficit. The year before that, he also promised a surplus; he also delivered a deficit. That time it was \$25 million. The Premier is promising a surplus again this year. Why does he think anyone will believe this?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, actually we're estimating surpluses all the way out to 2015, but I don't want to get too far ahead of the Liberal leader on that matter.

Secondly, the Liberal leader should know — should the Liberal leader have any intention of fulfilling the responsibility and duties of a Finance minister — that during the course of a fiscal year, there will be variances. Now, the only thing we can take from the member's question is the fact that when people need more access to physicians during the course of a fiscal year, the Liberal leader would say no, because the Liberal leader has estimated a surplus. When people need more access to hospitals, the Liberal leader would say no, because the Liberal leader has made an estimate on a year-end surplus. When the collective bargaining process wraps up and the employer — the government — is obligated to pay its employees, the guaranteed, negotiated results of the collective bargaining process itself, the Liberal leader would say no to those wages and benefits due to the employees of the government because of some estimate that the Liberal leader thinks is actually the most important part of being a government and a Finance minister.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Premier should take this from the question, that this government, on this trajectory, will leave few options for any future government.

Here are the facts: two years ago, the Premier promised a surplus, overspent by \$45 million and delivered a deficit. Last spring, the Premier again promised a surplus, overspent by \$23 million and delivered another deficit. Those are the facts: promising surpluses, overspending and delivering deficits.

The Premier has been wrong by \$70 million over the past two years. How much can Yukoners expect him to be wrong by this year?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** It appears the Liberal leader now believes that the numbers in the budget are wrong. Here's what the Liberal leader should do: stand in this House and present to Yukoners the right numbers. Obviously the member must know them if these are the wrong numbers.

Now I would caution the Liberal leader about something: the numbers in the budget document, from the first page to the last page, are the product of a great many people and we, the Yukon Party government, are very confident when we present this budget to the Auditor General for our public accounts. What that shows is we have trust in the employees who construct budgets; the Liberal leader does not.

**Question re: Fiscal management**

**Mr. Mitchell:** Last week the editor of Yukon's only daily paper commented that, when it comes to this budget, this government is facing a "crisis of credibility".

There are lots of reasons why the Premier's budget isn't credible. It promises a surplus — something Yukoners haven't gotten from this government in two years. It also promises to cut O&M expenses from what we spent this year, even though O&M has gone up every year under the Yukon Party.

Does the Premier agree that this budget has a "crisis of credibility", or does he think the editor has it wrong?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** It is certainly not anyone in the government's job to comment on someone's opinion. We'll leave their opinion to themselves. Furthermore, obviously the Liberal leader believes that editorial — a piece of opinion — is in fact the situation that the Yukon is actually in. I think not, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, we have created a savings account; we have used it in time of need, and we are replenishing the savings account and growing the savings account all the way out to 2015.

Now the Liberal leader has made a comment and a commitment to the Yukon public. It is all about trust. It is about the Liberal leader's plan. If he doesn't agree with the budget numbers, tell Yukoners what his numbers are. I have a suggestion for the Liberal leader when it comes to his plan: put it to music so he can at least entice some Yukoners to listen. It is a song written by and performed by Jackson Brown. It is called *Running On Empty*.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we'll all be running on empty if this Premier keeps spending the way he has been. As for opinions, just a few years ago he had quite a lot to say about an opinion — that of the Auditor General of Canada. Now, Mr. Speaker, O&M has gone up every year under the Yukon Party; however, this election year budget says that, for the first time in this administration's history, it will cost less to run the government this year than last year. According to this budget, it will cost less to run the departments of Community Services, Economic Development, Energy, Mines and Resources, Environment, Justice, Tourism and Culture, ECO, and the Women's Directorate. A balanced budget would be convenient, Mr. Speaker, but it is not likely, and Yukoners know that. Aside from the upcoming election, what makes this budget year different from every other year?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** What makes the long tenure of the Yukon Party government different from the members opposite is many things. Mr. Speaker, it is a savings account and a healthy fiscal position. It is taking care of Yukoners' health care needs, and education; taking care of our seniors; taking care of our youth; strengthening our social safety net; building housing for those in need; targeting strategic infrastructure for the benefit of Yukoners today and Yukoners long into the future. It's about an economy, and we have one. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country and are one of the shining lights in the Canadian federation.

It's about more than that; it's about solid financial management that puts in motion for governments in the future a fiscal framework that is a healthy financial position for the

Yukon, for choices to be made many, many years into that future. Mr. Speaker, the difference between the Yukon Party government and the Liberals: we have a plan — financial, economic, environmental, health and social. They don't have anything; they're running on empty.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Premier talks about the savings account. According to the budget he tabled for the current year — the supplementary last week — the savings account equals half of what's tied up in asset-backed paper.

Mr. Speaker, this main estimate is the last one this government will ever table. Before this fiscal year is out, Yukoners will go to the polls and give their opinion on Yukon Party financial management. That financial management will include \$220 million in long-term debt, once the Yukon Party is done racking up the credit cards. It includes two unplanned and unexplained deficits in a row and it includes a final budget that is difficult to believe. The editor of the Yukon's only daily paper knew what kind of budget this is. He said, quote: "It sounded like a Finance minister delivering his farewell address and developments may very well play out along that line."

Why should any Yukoner believe this fantasy budget?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** It's getting pretty hard to differentiate between the Liberal leader and the so-called daily paper. One can assume, then, that they both have the same position. That's fine. Then the Liberal leader can articulate for Yukoners what his plan is. We've presented ours, not only for this year — the coming year — but also all the way out to 2015. By the way, Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party government is more than confident in presenting that to the Yukon public. It's surely a lot more than the Liberal leader has ever presented. He says the numbers are wrong; he says this is about trust. To build some trust for the Liberals in this territory, tell Yukoners what the actual budget numbers are.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We'll proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

#### **Bill No. 24: Second Reading — *First Appropriation Act, 2011-12* — adjourned debate**

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 24, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Fentie; adjourned debate, Mr. Mitchell.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, honourable members, I am pleased to reply today to the budget tabled by the Finance minister last Thursday. It is the last budget of this Yukon Party government and Yukoners could hardly afford another one.

Over the last four years, this government has spent the Yukon savings account down from \$165 million to just \$18 million projected for this year-end.

At the same time, this government has borrowed more than \$162 million and moved it off the main books and into the Crown corporations. This doesn't even include another \$60 million needed to finish new hospitals in Dawson and Watson Lake. Add another \$50 million for the new emergency room at

Whitehorse General Hospital and this government is on track to leave Yukoners a parting gift of \$270 million in debt.

"Wow," says the Member for Kluane — big numbers. This type of borrowing is unprecedented in Yukon's history and it will be the legacy of this regime. The Premier didn't mention any of this in his budget speech last week. He did comment on the fiscal situation the Yukon finds itself in and said, quote: "If this isn't good financial management, I don't know what is." Leaving Yukoners more than a quarter of a billion in debt is not good financial management. The Premier has described his brand of fiscal management as putting us on the path to prosperity. We believe most Yukoners will see that this massive borrowing spree is, in fact, leading Yukoners down a garden path. All this red ink has led us to this point in time, to the final budget of the mandate. The government has taken great pains to highlight the fact this budget is balanced — and at first glance, it appears to be. On paper, it shows a projected \$38-million surplus.

It shows the savings account rebounding this coming fiscal year from \$18 million to \$43 million. It's no surprise the Premier is presenting this as a surplus budget. There is an election coming, after all. Of course, the Premier said the same thing last year and the year before and we know how both those budgets ended — in the red. Trust is based on past performance. In the last two years, this government has promised surpluses, but delivered deficits.

"If this isn't good financial management, I don't know what is." Those are the Premier's words. They speak volumes.

Now the Premier — on the eve of an election — is once again asking Yukoners to trust this government. Given what was promised and what was delivered in the last two budgets, why would anyone trust this government?

As the members opposite hold on to power until the bitter end, this is the question that Yukoners are asking themselves again and again. It started with the \$36 million in bad investments. It moved to the top of the list when this government's secret negotiations to privatize our energy future were exposed, and it was solidified in the last two years with the deficits and borrowing that have dominated the fiscal plans of this government.

Many Yukoners, particularly those who see themselves as conservatives, are profoundly disappointed with the approach this government has taken in this regard. They, like the rest of us, have made up their minds about this government and will vote accordingly this fall.

If the Premier were confident in the direction this government is going, particularly with regard to deficits and debt, he would have declared his intention to lead his party into the next campaign. He has not. Instead, he has been forced to hold a leadership convention just to stay on as leader. Even his own party has passed judgment on the financial direction the government has taken. Trust has evaporated.

When this sitting ends, the Yukon Party will head into a leadership convention. The Premier may still be a candidate in that contest, or he may decide to turn over the reins to someone else. It doesn't matter to us or to Yukon voters. They have watched the Premier's colleagues back him time and again on

privatization of our energy future, on deficit budgets, on bad investments, on attacks on the credibility of the Auditor General of Canada, on interference in the *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan*, on fighting First Nations and francophones in court, and the list goes on. Voters can see they are all in it together. The Premier has also said they are.

It's possible the leadership race will produce a winner who is not currently a member of the governing caucus. We know Yukon Party officials have been talking to several people in the territory about this possibility. That new leader will try desperately to distance him or herself from this government, and those sitting members who do run again will also try to put some distance between themselves and their former leader.

Yukoners will not be fooled. They will have their say. As all this unfolds in the back rooms of the Yukon Party, Liberals will be talking to Yukoners, presenting ideas and getting ready for the campaign to come.

I would like to once again today thank my constituents for entrusting me with representing them in this House. I have had the privilege of representing Copperbelt residents for the past five and a half years, and it has been a great honour to do so. For those of you who phone me, e-mail me, or stop me in person to provide your thoughts, your concerns and your ideas, I very much appreciate your input, your criticisms and your support.

This will be, without a doubt, the last full sitting before an election, so it is my last opportunity to represent the riding of Copperbelt, as it presently exists.

When Copperbelt was first created as a riding in 2002, it was carved out to reduce the rapidly increasing population of Whitehorse West and provide more even representation by the population.

It soon grew to become the most populous riding in Yukon with over 1,800 eligible voters in 2006 and well over 2,000 today. When the election writ drops, the riding as we now know it will cease to exist and there will be four ridings that will include portions of the current riding: Copperbelt North, Copperbelt South, Mountainview, and a small portion of Takhini-Kopper King being the Fish Lake Road beyond city limits.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to represent all residents of Yukon's most populated riding. As I have said before, Copperbelt manages to be representative of many different sectors of Yukon society with ranches, country residential, suburban subdivisions, apartment houses, mobile homes, businesses, industrial areas, hotels, the airport and a school — all coexisting within its boundaries. It is indeed very diverse.

Over the years, our riding has experienced many ups and downs. We benefited from the Hamilton Boulevard extension, but Lobird residents were subjected to the terror of flying rocks from the blasting to create it. We have had rapid construction of homes in new subdivisions, but had to struggle to maintain green spaces while accommodating new neighbours.

We have appreciated the great care provided in the nearby Copper Ridge Place but have seen long delays in opening up the final wings to accommodate the increased demand.

Our children have received excellent educations from dedicated teachers, the principal and vice principals at Elijah Smith Elementary School, but also had to see many other children bused to other schools because of insufficient capacity at Elijah Smith Elementary School. In every case, the input and advice of my constituents has helped me to raise and represent these and other issues in this Chamber, so I say to them today, "Thank you once again."

There has also been change in this Assembly since I arrived here in 2005. Some members chose not to run again, or were unsuccessful in their re-election bids in 2006, while others arrived for the first time in the last general election and grew into their roles here. The government was successful in being elected to a second term that year and our caucus — which grew to two when I first joined the former MLA for Porter Creek South in 2005 — grew again when we were joined by the members for Kluane and Mayo-Tatchun in early 2006 and, yet again, in the 2006 general election with their re-election and the election of my other colleagues — the MLA for Porter Creek South and the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin. It has been an honour to work with my colleagues these past four years as the Official Opposition, advocating on behalf of our constituents and all Yukoners.

We were all terribly saddened last year with the passing of our late colleague, Todd Hardy, the former MLA for Whitehorse Centre. We are all pleased to see Whitehorse Centre once again represented in this Chamber with the election of the new MLA for Whitehorse Centre, the Leader of the Third Party.

This is the sixth time I've risen to respond to main estimates of the current government. It is my responsibility as Leader of the Official Opposition to be first to respond to the budgets, and it is a privilege to do so. As always, there will be things in the budget that we support and appreciate on behalf of Yukoners. There will be items or amounts that we disagree with, and there will be things not present that we feel should have been a priority of this government on behalf of all Yukoners.

The Premier has tabled a budget that projects \$1.089 billion in spending and predicts \$1.105 billion in anticipated revenue. Only 11.1 percent of that spending is financed locally; the rest comes from other sources. After nine years of this government, we are as dependent as ever on Ottawa to help us pay our way. Reducing this dependence was a major objective of this government and it has failed to achieve it. The Premier often says that the Official Opposition doesn't believe Yukoners are entitled to our fair share and to equal programs and services as are all Canadians. Nothing could be further from correct, Mr. Speaker. But it's this government that claimed years ago that they would move us toward self-sufficiency; they have failed to do so over eight years.

In the Premier's speech last Thursday, he listed what he sees as successes of his government: low unemployment, record mineral exploration, increased mining development and production, higher retail sales and population growth. We can agree that these are positive things. While we would suggest that many of these are due to record gold and base-metal prices, low interest rates and great work done by the officials in many

departments, we will also acknowledge that the government has clearly played a role as well. But we must also hold this government responsible not just for these positives, but for their failures as well.

There have been fiscal failures. In the spring of 2009, the Premier stood in this House and tabled a budget that predicted a nearly \$20-million surplus. When the final figures were in at year-end, numbers that were audited by the Auditor General of Canada in the public accounts, so we know them to be correct, they revealed that they ended the fiscal year with a \$25-million deficit — a swing of \$45 million. That was strike one.

Last spring the Premier tabled a budget that predicted a \$2.9-million surplus, and by last fall it had deteriorated into a \$2.4-million deficit. We now know that budget is even more in the red just a few short months later, with the government now projecting a \$20-million deficit for the current fiscal year that has but two months remaining. That was strike two, Mr. Speaker — the second failure to meet estimates or expectations.

Each time we had predicted that the Premier was overly optimistic in his predictions, the Premier said we were wrong, and yet the figures proved us right. These budget overruns occurred while we were receiving extraordinary extra funding from Ottawa — the federal stimulus funding. We can only imagine where we would be without that.

Over the last five years, this government has underestimated its O&M spending in its main estimates by \$175 million — \$50 million of that in this fiscal year alone. It's interesting to note that despite the massive increase in transfers from Ottawa, this government has still managed to run deficits over the past two years.

In the 2000-01 fiscal year, the Yukon received \$366 million in transfers from Canada. This year, we will get more than double that amount at \$745 million. We're going to be in the red, not in the black.

On this question of deficits, the Premier is in denial. He spent a good deal of Question Period last fall and again this past week denying it. And judging from the media coverage of his budget, he spent a good deal of time denying it to reporters. They didn't buy it and Yukoners won't buy it either.

The numbers tell the real story. A hard reality is a \$23-million deficit for the 2009-10 fiscal year and a phony \$2.9-million surplus for 2010-11 that has now turned into a \$20-million deficit for 2010-11.

Now the Premier is once again predicting a balanced budget, this time for 2011-12, and a growth in net financial resources. Given the second consecutive deficit budget delivered last week, Yukoners will not believe the Premier's assurances that this coming year's budget is balanced. Trust is based on past performance. In the past two years, this government has promised surpluses but delivered deficits. Now the Premier, on the eve of an election, is once again asking Yukoners to put their trust in this government.

There is no reason for Yukoners to trust the Premier's budget estimates for next year because he doesn't deliver, and what he does deliver doesn't match what he promises. The Premier wants us to trust him with our money. We're here to

tell Yukoners, "Don't." Don't trust this Premier's optimistic predictions for a healthy savings account next year. We don't believe the budget estimates are realistic — not because the officials have not done their part to present a good estimate, but because this Minister of Finance has proven he can't follow the plan. The plan may be laid out, but he doesn't follow it.

Indeed, the editor of our local daily paper said this government's inability to forecast has left it facing, quote: "a crisis of credibility for the government when the subject turns to confidence in its ability to produce a surplus."

So as the Premier or his successor travels the territory promoting this budget over the next few months, this crisis of credibility will travel with them. We believe that this is a fantasy budget and when Yukoners look beneath the surface, they will come to the same conclusion: it's unbelievable, imaginary — a fantasy.

For example, Mr. Speaker, operation and maintenance figures for 2011-12 are estimated to be lower than what we have already spent this year. The budget the Premier just tabled projects it will cost less to operate the Government of Yukon next year than it has cost this year. Year after year, under the Yukon Party, the cost of operations has gone up, not down. Last year alone, costs rose almost \$50 million from the start of the year to the end of the year. Yet in this election budget, the government is estimating a \$10-million drop in operation spending — it's completely unrealistic.

Based on past performance, we don't believe this election budget; we don't think Yukoners believe it and we aren't even sure if the Premier believes it himself. Of course, this being an election year, Yukoners will have to decide whether or not to trust this government before we get to the end of the fiscal year. It is easy to promise great things and great results in an election budget because the final numbers will only be known after the general election, so we are very sceptical about this budget, and we will be examining and challenging it very closely.

How is the surplus achieved? Well, there are many areas, Mr. Speaker, where what we're seeing now is not what we were promised in the past. In a government news release dated April 21, 2010, the Minister of Education said the construction of the new F.H. Collins Secondary School was scheduled to be completed in late 2012. Look at this year's budget. What we heard just earlier in Question Period confirms that this will not happen. The new school has been pushed back yet another year. Instead of the \$24.4 million that was put into the long-term forecast at this time last year, the government will spend only \$2.7 million on capital expenditures in the current year. How are we to accept five-year capital plans when they change so dramatically in year 1, never mind year 5?

The Premier said earlier today this is just the first of many surpluses. Well, if you can't pull it off once, why would you pull it off two, three, or four times following?

The long-term capital plan that the government has put forward says that Management Board hasn't even made a decision on the completion date of the school or the total cost of the project. The government wanted to present a surplus budget on the eve of an election, so it cut out this major project to help



balance the books — \$21.7 million saved with the stroke of a pen.

The Minister of Education has made no public announcements of this change of plans. Has the school council or the building advisory council even been informed of the delay?

What else has been done, Mr. Speaker, to present this fantasy balanced budget? Well, in the Department of Health and Social Services the Premier has forecast an increase of only \$5 million. The Premier's own speech points out that health care costs have been growing an average of \$12 million a year for the past decade. There is no reason to believe that that will change this coming year, yet the government has once again lowballed the estimate for the Department of Health and Social Services. We said two years ago that the Department of Health and Social Services would not be run on the amounts that were on the main estimates and the Premier and his colleagues were incredulous that we could say such a thing, but we were, in fact, correct. We said it last year, and we have been proven correct again. Perhaps the Minister of Health and Social Services can provide a more plausible explanation when he responds to the budget speech later this week. "If this isn't good financial management, I don't know what is." Those were the Minister of Finance's words.

Now, of the \$43 million that the Premier is counting on to keep him in the black next year, approximately \$26 million is made up of what the government expects to get back on its ABCP investment fiasco. These were investments made in August 2007 that the Auditor General of Canada said violated our *Financial Administration Act*. We all remember the Premier's response: this was simply the Auditor General of Canada's opinion. Just her opinion; he said that he had others. It is comments like that that have created the crisis of credibility to which I referred earlier. It is now more than three and one-half years later, and the government still can't get its money back, and Yukoners may never see all of it again. What does the Premier say? "If this isn't good financial management, I don't know what is."

As I've said, this will probably be the last look at the books Yukoners will get before the next election. Over the summer months, the government will likely make some announcements about new projects and they will be backed up by nothing — no line items, no budget update. Yukoners will be asked to take the government's word that the money will be there — a fantasy, says the Member for Kluane. Yukoners are asked to fantasize.

We'd like to see a financial update before we go to the polls, so I'll ask the Premier to make a commitment today that he will provide Yukoners with a budget update on June 1 and on September 1, so they can see for themselves how much money has been spent over the ensuing few months. We'll see just how open and accountable this government really is.

We know the government will not provide it; their preference is to spend for six months and go to the polls with a financial picture that is at least six months out of date. Based on past history, the numbers may be much worse than projected, but voters won't know until it is too late to judge.

Perhaps equally as bad as the two consecutive deficit budgets and the fantastic numbers we have before us for this year is the amount of debt this government has run up over the last two years of its mandate.

The government is borrowing some \$170 million through its Crown corporations — \$70 million through the Hospital Corporation and a whopping \$100 million through the Yukon Development Corporation. Add in mortgage debt at the Housing Corporation and \$50 million for the new emergency room that needs to be built, according to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's CEO and the chair at Whitehorse General Hospital, and we will have almost reached our new borrowing limit of \$300 million. If we are living within our means, as the Premier says, why was it necessary to ask Ottawa to increase our borrowing limit? The Premier says, "If this isn't good fiscal management, I don't know what is."

Mr. Speaker, a child born this week at Whitehorse General Hospital will still be paying off some of these loans when they hit their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. It's bad enough that the main books no longer balance over the past few years, but the Premier has also resorted to moving expenditures off the main books when he tables his budgets to make the situation appear better than it really is. If these amounts were included, the picture would not be very pretty. But the Premier and his team have made a political decision, and they have moved them off the main books.

Yukoners should not be fooled by the government's sleight of hand. We are borrowing our entire contribution to the Mayo B project because the government doesn't have the money to pay for any of it up front. Everyone on that side of the House — and probably this side as well — will be long gone, but Yukoners will be paying the bills for this extraordinary spending spree for the next 30 years.

This scale of borrowing has never been seen in the Yukon before. No government of any political stripe, including the Yukon Party, has mortgaged the future in such an irresponsible way. Past governments have, for many years, acted responsibly with the public's money. They have recognized that you can't do everything at once because it's irresponsible to pile up more and more debt and expect future generations to pay the bills. That's the path this government is taking. The impacts of the borrowing decisions of this government will be millions of dollars paid in interest over the next 30 years. The money tied up in asset-backed commercial paper investments would have come in handy now, because it would have cut the amount we needed to borrow considerably, but the Premier said at the time, "We don't need that money; we have lots."

This government only has its eye on the next election and it's turning a blind eye to the long-term costs of this borrowing.

It's all about trust and nobody trusts this tired government. The costs of Mayo B, the new hospital residence, the renovations to the Thomson Centre, and the construction of two new hospitals have all been moved off the main ledgers. It's easy to make the numbers work when you simply take the bad stuff and pretend it doesn't exist.

There will be a great deal of focus this sitting on the spending in the Department of Health and Social Services. The Auditor General of Canada has completed a report on the de-

partment's spending and it will be released next week. Madam Fraser will be in Whitehorse to release the report herself, and it would have been appropriate for her to address this Assembly and speak to the contents of that report, but we now know that that won't be happening.

The report itself will nevertheless be released, and Yukoners will decide for themselves if their tax dollars are being used wisely in the area of health care. We're particularly interested to see what the Auditor General has to say about the Watson Lake hospital project. This was originally a \$5-million project that this government has now managed to turn into a \$25-million project. It is also about five years behind its original schedule.

Another reason why Yukoners are increasingly giving up on this Yukon Party government is because of how this government treats reports, commissions and recommendations made by fellow Yukoners. In December, the government chose to reject the recommendations of the Peel Watershed Planning Commission — recommendations that resulted from six years of work and consultations with thousands of Yukoners.

In January the government tabled two new reports by commissions struck by the government and simultaneously announced a plan that was in direct conflict with the recommendations in these reports. We're speaking of the report on severely intoxicated persons at risk, Mr. Speaker. The report recommends: Recommendation No. 4: "A new sobering centre should be created in downtown Whitehorse to be used as the facility where acutely intoxicated persons at risk are accommodated when they are detained under the Yukon *Liquor Act* or its replacement. The philosophy of this institution should be consistent with the social mores and human rights of today and should function under a harm reduction model."

Instead —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** I'd like to welcome into the gallery today a young student, Connor Quigley. He's a grade 11 student from Porter Creek Secondary School, and he's on a work experience program here in the House. Let's welcome him to the House.

*Applause*

**Mr. Mitchell:** Instead, the government has chosen to criminalize this behaviour by incorporating the new sobering centre into the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, against the recommendations of the report's co-authors. Why does this government persist in asking Yukoners to study a problem and recommend a solution to government while steadfastly determined to implement their preconceived solution? That is what many Yukoners are now asking. Worse still, this is the extent of the government's response to the report. The capital budget before us contains no money to improve services downtown, as asked for in the report, where it is needed the most.

The Premier let off his speech last year trying to portray his government as one of action — major studies followed by implementation of a plan. He even tried to include education

reform on that list. Again last week, he claimed education reform as a success. The reality is this government has been talking about educational reform and talking and talking and talking without actually introducing any reforms. The budget promised, "We're finally ready to act." Well, after eight years of waiting, we're just a little sceptical, as is the public.

The education reform project was dead on arrival. The Premier told the Minister of Education not to support the central recommendation of the report, which was a more collaborative approach to education with First Nations. The Premier wanted to continue a top-down approach, and the minister was happy to oblige. The order came from the top, and the minister fell in line.

In January 2009, the Auditor General of Canada released her findings on this government's performance on education. It wasn't pretty and a comprehensive response to the audit has never fully materialized. But we do know this — First Nations and rural graduation rates across Yukon are completely unacceptable. They are unacceptable to parents; they are unacceptable to First Nations; they must be unacceptable to the students and they are unacceptable to the Yukon Liberal Party — another major report and little follow-up from this government.

Now let's examine another report that has gathered dust since its release: the *Yukon Health Care Review*. In his budget speech the Premier said, "In April 2008, our government established another major review, the *Yukon Health Care Review*, which examined the sustainability of Yukon's health care system over the next decade. The *Yukon Health Care Review* final report was completed in September 2008 and the Yukon Party government is acting on those recommendations."

In fact, the opposite is what's happening and the government never talks about the report, except in budget speeches. For example, Mr. Speaker, the report made two recommendations to increase accountability to the public. To improve accountability, the Minister of Health and Social Services, in consultation with the board chair, should be providing the chair and the board of the Hospital Corporation with an annual letter of expectation that provides the hospital board with a written mandate and articulates the minister's expectation for the board, as well as the minister's obligations to the Hospital Corporation. We would like to see one of those letters, Mr. Speaker, if they even exist.

Another recommendation was that the Department of Health and Social Services should continue to develop an accountability plan on an annual basis for the government and minister that identifies the department's strategic direction and planned actions to achieve that direction. The plan needs to include the identification of measurable indicators that can be used by the government to assess performance and outcomes. Two and a half years later, this recommendation has not yet been followed up. Perhaps we'll learn differently next week when the CEO and the chair come before us.

Another issue that has not been addressed in the health care field is the need to address capacity issues at Whitehorse General Hospital in the emergency areas and ICU. Unfortunately, the government has not moved on this issue during its

first eight years in office, but there will no doubt be promises during its last year.

In the days leading up to this sitting, we raised the issue of the royalty provisions in our devolution agreement. When we pressed the government on what action has been taken to improve these provisions, the Premier answered, "Nothing has been done." All he did was criticize the previous government for signing the agreement in the first place. This government has had nine years to negotiate improvements to the agreement. Has it done so? No. If it thought the previous government did a poor job on the royalty issue, it could have gone to the Government of Canada and requested that chapter 7 of the devolution transfer agreement be looked at again, but it has not done so.

In light of the devolution transfer agreement reached in the Northwest Territories, Ottawa owes Yukon a better deal on resource royalties. The Government of the Northwest Territories will now receive 50 percent of resource royalties, up to a cap of five percent of their gross expenditure base.

If that deal were in place this year, for example, they estimate it would have meant another \$60 million in revenue for our neighbours to the east. Every year that passes without a devolution agreement means that the N.W.T. forgoes another year's net fiscal benefit. Over the last five years, the N.W.T. has estimated they lost \$208.6 million in potential net fiscal benefit. Those are their numbers.

Under the Yukon's devolution agreement, the Yukon keeps only the first \$3 million in royalties, with any amount above this offset dollar for dollar, 100 percent. It's clear that the bar has been raised with the signing of the N.W.T. agreement and that our neighbours are going to keep a much larger share of resource revenues.

So we are urging the Premier to move forward with Yukon First Nations to negotiate an agreement with the Government of Canada that will see Yukon keep more of its royalties. The benefit of increased mining development in Yukon should go to Yukoners. The increase in royalties should be shared with Yukon First Nation governments, of course. The N.W.T. agreement in principle includes a resource-revenue sharing agreement with regional aboriginal governments. A Liberal government would undertake a similar commitment with Yukon First Nations. We should all share in the increased wealth that comes from a rejuvenated mining sector.

As the Premier well knows, the *Umbrella Final Agreement* requires that this be so. With new mines coming into production, now is the time to move discussions with Ottawa forward. It is in our interest to have a new agreement in place when additional mines start generating significant additional royalties. These are our resources and we should be benefiting. Gaining a greater share of our royalties is an important step toward our own financial independence. But the Premier confirmed last week that those negotiations with Ottawa have not yet started. He did say that he was working with Yukon First Nations on discussing this issue and we're glad to learn that. The Premier also said that, should the N.W.T. receive a better agreement with Canada on sharing royalty revenues, we would certainly look into it and be looking at how we can further maximize

retention of revenues here in the Yukon. Since he said that, Mr. Speaker, it was disappointing to hear the Premier say in this House, "...non-renewable resources tend to be quite volatile. It's great to maximize the amount of royalties that we can retain here in Yukon, but what goes up in this area of non-renewable resource revenues will go down."

He basically said, "Well, the royalty amount might go down at some point, so I'm not sure it's worth asking for."

He also said he was content to contribute these royalties to Canada as part of paying our way. He described this as a good thing; he said that that's the Yukon Party's approach. We're sure this will be very disappointing to many Yukoners, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We take a different approach; we are going to stand up for Yukoners. It's fine to be a contributor to Canada — we should be — but these are, first and foremost, Yukon's natural resources and they are non-renewable resources at that. We would expect this Premier to stand up and be more like Danny Williams, and fight for this territory — not just roll over.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier's responses to my questions on devolution were very partisan. This is to be expected, and we take no issue with that. Question Period is often a partisan exchange. When the government is challenged we expect it will respond. We expect much the same in other budget reply speeches; we know that there will be partisan comments — that is all well and good — the budget speech itself is a different story, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is an address to all Yukoners that is supposed to lay out the government's objectives and spending priorities for the coming year. It is not the place for attacks on the opposition; it is neither statesmanlike nor appropriate for the Premier to engage in such behaviour. Even members on that side of the House were uncomfortable with this behaviour last Thursday.

Again, the editor of our local daily took notice. He commented that there was a surprising tendency for the Premier to stray from his budget speech text and denigrate his critics' positions on fundamental fiscal direction. It was disappointing and once again, the Premier's colleagues did nothing to stop it.

While we don't endorse the partisan nature of the Premier's speech, or the overall financial direction of this government, there are, of course, many worthwhile projects in the budget before us that we can support. I'll mention just a few today, because I know that my colleagues who are responsible for other critic areas will mention a number of other items, and they will come out in budget debate in the coming weeks.

We support the contributions to First Nation cultural centres in Haines Junction, in Whitehorse and in Burwash. Also, we support investments in our highways and community infrastructures such as improvements to the Mayo and Faro airports, and water and sewage treatment improvements in many communities; and we support money to develop more residential lots across Yukon, although we will believe this only when we see it occur, because we've seen that money lapse in years past. We're also pleased to see the government putting money into the Whistle Bend development here in the capital city, but again, we would like to have seen the planning start much earlier.

We are also pleased to see the government retreat from its decision to cancel community mental health programs. The Member for Vuntut Gwitchin, my colleague, wrote the minister last fall and urged him to reconsider this decision, and apparently, at long last he did. Mental health issues aren't ending. We need to be doing more, not less. It is a concern, however, that, for all these past months since it first became public, that those programs originally funded under the THAF were going to end with this coming year that the people who use the services and the people who provide them had to operate under the additional stress of the uncertainty of whether these programs would continue or not. There will certainly be some areas where we are disappointed with the size of allocations and some where we are disappointed to see no allocation at all. Now, since the government enjoys a majority in this Assembly, we have no illusions about there being any likelihood of our effecting any changes to this budget. For those who are listening, they should understand that in opposition, we cannot amend a budget or propose an amendment to increase spending in any area. We can only try to amend the budget to decrease spending.

So we will talk about it, but we know that this budget will in fact pass at the end of the day, as is.

The government has demonstrated year after year that it is unwilling to work with the Official Opposition when it comes to making changes to the annual spending blueprint. We are left to judge it as it is, and our comments must reflect it as it is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also like to take this time to congratulate the hundreds of young people who will be competing later this month at the Canada Winter Games in Halifax. We know you will enjoy your competitions as much as we enjoy cheering you on. We are very proud of each and every one of you. We also know that Halifax will rise to the challenge and put on great games, but we know that the bar was set very high two years ago in Yukon.

On a procedural note, we are happy to see the contents of the budget were largely delivered on the floor of the Assembly this year. It is a change of procedure for this government which, in the past, has told select groups what was in the budget before telling the members of this House. The use of warrants has also been kept to a minimum this year, although this is probably related to the early timing of the sitting, rather than to a greater appreciation for the conventions of this House.

When the former chair of the Yukon Development Corporation quit, he said several things on his way out the door. He said the Premier was in secret negotiations to privatize our energy future — that was true. He said the entire caucus knew all about it, and that was true. He also said the long-term plan put forward by the Energy Corporation was already outdated, given the developments in the mining industry. That is proving true.

If the Yukon Party knew this mining boom was going to happen, they should have been better prepared for its arrival. We heard from every mining company we talked to at this year's roundup about the need for more power, and we also heard about their disappointment in the government's lack of planning and lack of response.

An IPP policy that was in the works has not been heard from for months. With regard to energy planning for both the mining industry and for the growing population in Yukon that will accompany it, we're behind the eight ball, given the lack of planning done by this government over the past eight years. It should have started years earlier.

Another consistent message from mining companies was a lack of capacity sometimes in various regulatory bodies that is impacting the flow of mining development and the permitting process. Now, these various bodies are dealing with more and more activities and they require a high degree of professionalism, which they provide. So, to be clear, there is no criticism of the work that these bodies are doing. We didn't hear criticism from the mining companies about it. We did hear from the companies that they would like to see them coordinated in a timelier manner. The government should be looking to assist these bodies in providing the necessary resources to make sure this occurs.

It's a different situation, now that we have multiple applications that are being reviewed, from what we had in the past, when regulators had all the time in the world to look at one after another.

Secondly, we heard that there needs to be better regulatory coordination to prevent mining companies from becoming mired in endless processes, where they have to provide the same information in a slightly different template or format again and again. Again, the government should be helping in this regard. Improvements can always be made, and we would urge the government to move toward making them.

We're experiencing the same problems when it comes to available lots for new housing. We need more lots in Whitehorse and across Yukon, especially in Dawson, Mayo, Keno, Carmacks and Watson Lake — all of which are going to be impacted by increased mining activity, to support — the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin says, "We need more lots in Old Crow," — population growth due to mining and other activities.

This government has failed to keep up with demand and is woefully unprepared for the influx of population that has happened over the last few years and will continue into the future. People want to move and work here, but they can't find a place to live. The government members will stand up. We've heard it from the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation and we've heard the minister responsible for Energy, Mines and Resources saying that it's because of their success that there's such an influx of population. Well, if they believed they were on the successful path, they should have planned for their success, so that it would have net benefits to Yukon, not liabilities.

If everyone working, for example, in the mining sector — whether it be in exploration, whether it be in actual mine construction, or in actual mining — is not able to find affordable housing in Yukon, but is flying in and out on a rotational basis — they're spending their food dollars, their clothing dollars, their shelter dollars elsewhere in Canada, rather than within Yukon, when they're not resident here.

Considering the current royalty regime is not going to provide vast amounts of money until it has been renegotiated, those are the important spinoffs of mining, and we want those people to live in Yukon, and they want to live in Yukon. We heard from mining executives down in Vancouver, and I'm sure the members opposite must have heard it, too, because those executives told us they're telling this to the government, that they have had employees give up and go elsewhere for jobs because they were that frustrated with their inability to find a place to live in Yukon.

This lack of planning has also hit residents at the low end of the economic scale. There is a severe shortage of affordable housing in Yukon. It is needed across the spectrum for single moms, low-income individuals and families, young people just starting out on their career path and for seniors, who are often on fixed incomes. The government is finally moving in this regard, but the response is about five years too late.

It wasn't until Ottawa turned on the stimulus taps that this government finally started to build serious numbers of affordable housing units — so much for advanced planning.

With regard to education, there is another idea out there. It is one that the government hasn't even bothered to study, along with the other studies that they are not paying much attention to. We are referring to the idea and value of moving toward a university of the north or an Arctic university. It is one that has been gaining momentum in spite of this government's lack of attention to it. The Governor General of Canada has proclaimed his concern that Canada is the only northern country without an Arctic university. The Walter and Gordon Duncan Foundation has recently paid for a study of university activism in the north and has given the Dechinta in the Northwest Territories \$100,000 in seed money to pursue looking into this.

There have been articles about this in northern newspapers and magazines, including in *Up Here Business*. There will likely be only one bricks-and-mortar campus across the north with the other territories participating with distance education technology, at least to start. Our government should be advocating for it to be in Yukon. We most recently saw the Yukon lose out on the new Canadian High Arctic Research Station, and we should not let it happen again. We have the best Internet penetration of any jurisdiction in Canada, and a 100-percent fibre-optic connection to the south.

We have an international airport with daily jet service to Vancouver and frequent jet service to Alberta. We are the closest territory to the Pacific Rim, where many potential foreign students live and would come from. We have better road connections between our own communities and to the rest of Canada than do our sister territories. Our Yukon College is already providing more degree-granting programs than are the other northern colleges. We have the Yukon Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence already partnering with universities Outside. We should work with the existing college and other partners to make a northern university — a university in Yukon — a reality. It won't happen overnight. But it won't happen at all if we don't start down the path and plan for it. This should be a centre of higher education where our own Yukon students would be excited to study and where other Ca-

nadians and foreign students will be eager to attend. This university should be in addition to the many important programs that should continue to be provided through Yukon College, not instead of it. This would be a priority for a new Liberal government.

I'd like to move to the environment. This is an area that has always been low on the priority list of this government. We've watched as it has failed to produce state-of-the-environment reports in a timely manner, as required by law.

We've watched as it became the last jurisdiction in Canada to develop a climate change action plan. We were followers, not leaders, even though we will feel and are feeling the impacts of climate change faster and greater than other jurisdictions in southern Canada.

We watched the previous Minister of Environment attend major climate change conferences and focus on meeting celebrities instead of informing the world about the challenges we face. We've already seen the new minister back away from commitments he made on protecting McIntyre Creek, when he sat in opposition. When we ask questions about the Peel watershed, he was directed not to answer by the Premier.

The previous minister ignored advice from the Fish and Wildlife Management Board about the proper levels of sheep hunting, ignored a recommendation to close the current landfill in Old Crow — and the list goes on.

Regarding the Peel, we've heard from many Yukoners on this issue and we've taken what we heard into account. We're telling Yukoners about it well in advance of the next election. This government finally said something on this major issue in the days leading up to Christmas. It slipped a note under their door, saying, "We don't support what the commission has come up with." They would not say what they would support, simply that the current plan wasn't good enough. We would encourage the Premier and the Minister of Environment to let Yukoners know what position the government holds on the Peel and what position it will take into discussions with other governments.

The final draft *Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan* was produced by the Peel Watershed Planning Commission as part of the implementation of chapter 11 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* — the final agreements for Na Cho Nyäk Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nations and the *Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement*.

We would again like to thank the members of the commission for their work and thank Yukoners for participating in the process. This has been a long road, and we finally have a recommended plan in front of us. Many, many Yukoners have invested a lot of time and energy into this process and we have confirmation that people have a strong interest in what happens in this part of the Yukon.

But Yukoners know, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier worked hard behind the scenes to try and shape the contents of this report in a certain way. We know that there was political interference in the middle of the drafting process as to what information could even be released from one department to the people who were working on drafting the plan — and that is, of all departments, the Department of Environment. We know that

there was an attempt to therefore steer the commission in a certain direction.

We also know the then Minister of Environment — the Deputy Premier — sat back silently while this happened.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked to hundreds of Yukoners over the last few years about the Peel watershed. We have met with interest groups; we have met with First Nation governments; we have met with various organizations; we have met with constituents; we have met with many individual Yukoners, and we listened to their input on what the land use plan should look like. As a caucus, we discussed the draft plan and the new final plan released in January of last year. We received a full briefing on the plan itself from the commission last year. After all this, we concluded that much of the area in question should be protected from development for the foreseeable future because, as the planners said, “It’s best to take a precautionary approach and do no harm.” They didn’t preclude there ever being any resource extraction in this area. They didn’t say it should all be in one giant national park — locked up. They said, “Right now, it seems irreconcilable between the interest of Yukoners and First Nations who want to ensure that the environmental values they cherish are adequately protected around resource extraction at this point in time.”

As recently as this weekend I ran into one of the senior planners and we had a full discussion about this.

He agreed that the very approach they took, of using numerous SMAs so they could look at each little area in and of itself and determine what the most important values were and what risks would come of development in each area, was just such a precautionary approach. The planner himself said he had no expectation that other regional plans would be based on this particular approach. Indeed, the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan* employed a very different approach and that was, as the Member for Vuntut Gwitchin proudly says, the first plan to be completed in the Yukon under the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

In fact, the writers of the plan took great pains to point out right up front in their introduction that no one should view this plan as a template for future and other plans, yet that’s how the government has viewed it.

We now encourage the parties — the Yukon government and the four First Nation governments — to come together and reach agreement on a final plan that is consistent with the principles stated in the final draft plan.

As I’ve said, there have been concerns raised by some that the decision on how to proceed with the Peel will have an impact on future land use plans across the territory. We don’t share that concern and the drafters of the plan said it should not be viewed as a template for future plans. As the Yukon Land Use Planning Council continues its work, it will find — and in fact, it is already aware that each planning region is unique and will require a distinct approach. The commission has now met formally with the Government of Yukon and the affected First Nation governments and informed them of the contents of the plan. First Nations have already made their views known publicly on the plan. They support it. They have announced an extension. The government has announced an extension of the

one-year interim withdrawal from mineral staking to all Crown land, Category B settlement lands and fee simple lands in the Peel watershed region. We’re urging the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to let Yukoners know what their positions are on this issue.

I’ve said many times that money can’t buy trust and that certainly applies to this government’s approach to First Nations relations. To say that it needs to be improved is an understatement. This government has consistently taken a take-it-or-leave-it approach with First Nation governments. It has spent almost its entire mandate in court with one First Nation or another, and was recently sued yet again.

There has been much talk of P3s in recent years, meaning public/private partnerships. Unlike the NDP, the Liberal Party is willing to look at P3s where they do not displace existing public sector jobs. We believe there is a different kind of P3 opportunity that we have sadly been ignoring: public/public partnerships. Unlike private companies that may decide someday in a distant corporate office to shut down or downsize or relocate their Yukon operations, First Nations and their development corporations are not going anywhere. They have lived here for thousands of years and this is their home.

A Liberal government would access the opportunities to partner with First Nations and would encourage First Nation investment in Yukon infrastructure.

Another priority for a Liberal government — and we say this because the Premier has asked what our plan is, so we’re trying to point out things where we believe we can move forward and make progress. No, we’re not going to table our own 1,000-page budget documents. Clearly no opposition party ever has or could, without the resources available through the officials across government.

But another priority for a Liberal government would be to look toward the grid inter-tie with our neighbours of British Columbia or Alaska. Within 10 or 20 years, this could be a reality. It will take a lot of work, a lot of money and a lot of cooperation, but it is something worth pursuing if we are to grow our economy and also to wean ourselves off diesel and other non-renewable resources we’re using for power.

The Premier talks about working with our northern partners — meaning our sister territories — but ends up in court with our own First Nation governments instead of in business. A Liberal government would do this differently.

One other issue that needs to be mentioned in the context of First Nation relations is children in care. There are systemic issues with First Nation children being apprehended and poor information flow to parents about how to repatriate their children. This issue reached a flashpoint last year with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. We warned the government about this issue during the process to rewrite the *Children’s Act* and our observations were ignored and our attempts to propose amendments were thwarted. But in the last two weeks alone, I’ve been contacted by two different families yet again about their concerns about the communications and what happens when children are apprehended.

There may be and obviously are very real reasons why children are removed from homes, because they are seen as

being at risk, but that doesn't mean that the information flow should stop. That's what needs to be fixed.

I'd like to talk a little about cooperation with different levels of government. While the Yukon Party government has made a habit of going to court with First Nations, this is not the only other level or order of government with which it cannot cooperate. On the municipal level, community leaders have been asking for the government to intervene in the long-standing problem of mineral staking within municipal boundaries. This government's approach on this issue has simply been to ignore it and hope it goes away. It should be working with municipalities to find a better solution to the land use challenges and conflicts between residential housing and mineral claims. There are currently situations in both Dawson and Whitehorse where a policy vacuum has left residents, miners and regulators with nowhere to turn. The problems on the Dome Road and around the Whitehorse municipal landfill and the ski trails could have been avoided, but instead we have seen gridlock.

The Yukon Party government has been unwilling or unable to resolve this issue. We would not shy away from it. Everyone involved deserves better than they are getting from this government. At the least, the people should be brought together to see if there is a way to find solutions.

During the last election campaign our party committed to developing a knowledge-worker strategy, identifying where the Yukon can differentiate itself from other jurisdictions. This is a relatively new sector of our economy, and one that is more deserving of attention from the Government of Yukon. For the possible savings with regard to health care alone, this is worth pursuing. For whatever reason, the government has virtually ignored this potential economic generator, but we would not.

Another issue that is much on the minds of Yukoners is legislative reform, or fixing how this Chamber works, and sometimes doesn't work. The government has finally, after seven years of refusing to touch it, agreed to engage on this issue. Our Legislature has a committee that could resolve many of the concerns that have been raised. Under previous governments, both Liberal and NDP, it met regularly. Under the current government it has not met for over three years, and that is the Standing Committee on Rules, Elections and Privileges, otherwise known as SCREP. We've had a lot more scrap than SCREP in here.

Instead of having this committee do its job, the government has set up yet another all-party committee; however, any proposals from the public will not be implemented until after the next election. In fact, I don't believe this government has yet called for this committee to meet or even announced who the representative will be from the government side and who will chair it. The Third Party and we in the Official Opposition identified our members long ago. Of course, this did come from a motion from the Third Party. This government will have succeeded in serving out two full terms without making any improvements in the way of legislative reform, and that is a dubious honour.

The budget before us contains no funding, yet again, for a permanent youth shelter. It is not acceptable to bounce kids

from Skookum Jim's to the Sarah Steele detox to various daytime programs. Each of these organizations is doing a good job in terms of the role they play, but it's not a permanent solution. These young people deserve a permanent solution. A Liberal government would make sure this happens. This is an idea the current government has gone back and forth on. Various candidates promised it in the last election, back in 2006, but it has never made it to the top of this government's priority list. Economic issues have always meant more to this government than these social issues, and this is a prime example.

I'm going to raise another one. Last fall, this House voted to move forward on a homeless shelter in Whitehorse. Again, the budget before us contains no money to actually build that shelter. NGOs have been coming to this government for a number of years with proposals, but none have been good enough for this government to get behind and support. There has always been an excuse. Nine years have passed, and no action has been taken. We still have, on a regular basis, people going and occupying the only 10 beds at the Salvation Army with sometimes as many as 15 or 20 more people sleeping across plastic chairs and on tables. It's unacceptable — unacceptable. We've covered a lot of ground here today, and we have provided the government with several suggestions on how this budget could be improved — something which we've tried to do every year.

The Premier has talked about cooperating with the opposition and we'll get another indication of how serious he is about it by how he treats the proposals that we've put forward. We have serious reservations about the spending patterns of this Yukon Party government. This budget suffers from a crisis of credibility.

We do not support the Premier's plan to mortgage the future in such an irresponsible way. This is the last main estimate — the last budget — that this government will table before an election, and that is a good thing, because the long-term financial health of the Yukon could not readily stand another one like it. Yukoners no longer trust this government — and with good reason. The plan to privatize our energy future poisoned the waters for many voters who are eager to go to the polls and vote for a government they can trust.

I've laid out several areas that need improvement and several areas where a Liberal government would use a different approach. How government treats the least fortunate in our society is one area where we definitely have different views than the current administration. We have been raising the issue of poverty for years and the need to fight it. The previously announced second phase of the social inclusion strategy is a good place to start. It could be the basis for change and for putting the money into making new inroads against poverty, affordable housing, additional support for the working poor, additional mental health resources, and substance abuse treatment to deal with issues that add to the burden on many of society's least fortunate and addressing hunger are all part of that long list. How we look after our environment is another. We believe in a balanced approach, one that creates jobs and protects our wilderness. That is sadly lacking in today's Yukon.

In closing, I want to thank officials across government for their work in preparing the documents that we are discussing today. It is one of the largest tasks of the year for many government officials and we appreciate their hard work, particularly those in the Department of Finance. Officials have worked tirelessly once again to bring forward a fiscal plan for Yukoners. We can only hope the government is more capable of following the plan this year than it has been in years past.

Thank you. Merci. Mahsi' cho.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Well, Mr. Speaker, that was very interesting — very, very interesting. We have listened to the Leader of the Official Opposition for five and one-half years, his recommendations and his comments on the floor here. But as he says himself, “What is said in the House here has nothing to do with what happens out on the street.” In other words, this is just a game — a political game. I’m quoting him when he says that actual facts that happen on the street are different.

I hope Yukoners are listening to the member opposite. When the time comes to go to the people of the territory, I’m certain they will not take what the member opposite says in the House here very seriously.

First of all, in my opening comments this afternoon — and I only have 40 minutes to enter the debate this afternoon with two of the bigger departments, Community Services and Highways and Public Works. I’d like to thank the hard-working individuals in the Department of Community Services and the Department of Highways and Public Works for their daily hard work for Yukoners.

I have had the responsibility of representing them in this House for the last three years. I find the departments do a stellar job for Yukon. If you were to look at our budgets here today and look at where we were when we were elected in 2002, what we promised Yukoners when we went to the polls was economic reliability and economic management. I would remind the Liberal Party of the state of the territory in 2002. We couldn’t pay our bills, and we ran the operation of government on a line of credit. The caucus in 2002 understood one thing: we had to get the economic viability of the Yukon back on track.

Now, the Liberal Party — to give them credit — were only in power for 18 months, so they had a very short time to do anything in government. So what they did do certainly reflected badly on the economy of the territory. They didn’t fix the economy. That was our task and today our task is done. I can go back to the Yukon people, my constituents — I’ve lived in the Yukon most of my life — and ask them: “Are you better off today than you were in 2002?” Well, for one thing, I’ll find more Yukoners out there to answer the question because there are more Yukoners today than there were in 2002.

The unemployment rate is 3.6 percent. It was verging on 12 percent when the Liberal government was in power. The proof is in the pudding. What did we do as a government? What did we do differently from the people opposite? Well, as Yukoners, we went to work and improved the economic climate of the territory.

Now, Mr. Speaker, listening to the member opposite, the Leader of the Official Opposition, what does he have to offer Yukoners? Well, I would say he has to offer more of what the Liberals always offer — promises and no results.

Now, the members opposite say to us — they divorce themselves from the Liberal Party. They say that’s got nothing to do with us. But you only have to look behind them to see who is actually working within the party and find out it’s the same old people, with the same old tired answers to all of our issues. This government has worked diligently on the economics of the territory. Without an economically sound budget or economically sound management, none of these other things work. You can’t have a social network, or safety net, without first having an economic foundation able to support that safety net.

The members opposite talk about housing. We have increased the social housing program in the Yukon Housing Corporation by 40 percent. Now, where did that come from? That came from sound financial foundations. We have the resources so we can invest back in the Yukon.

When we talk about increase in population and increase in opportunity in the territory that has come over the nine years, I was counting the number of second-generation Yukoners who are now serving in our communities as medical doctors — second-generation Yukoners working in our territory in the medical field — and there are four. There is another one in Winnipeg working right now so that she can come back to the Yukon. She is studying emergency medicine in Winnipeg. That will be five, second-generation Yukoners.

Why did they come back to the Yukon? Because the opportunities are here in the territory. They weren’t here in the territory nine years ago. There wasn’t the financial wherewithal to do the expansion we have done.

The member opposite talks about the issue of bad governance. That is the buzz word of the week for the Leader of the Official Opposition — bad governance. The same individual, by the way — and I won’t go on about this, but I find it incredible that we would sit here and listen for two hours about the negativity of the Yukon and the departments that put these budgets together. The member can cover it up any way he wants, but I don’t work on my budget — Highways and Public Works and Community Services. I task the departments to present them to us.

I just represent the department in the House here and on a daily basis. When people come in, I work with the department. So when he points fingers at us and then stands up and tells the world that he didn’t mean the Department of Finance was incapable of putting a budget together or, by the way, following a budget that is fantasy, that the Department of Finance is in the middle of a fantasy thing. These departments listen to this conversation. They listen to us in this House, so it is serious. It’s not just about politics; it’s about good governance, and it starts with all the departments and us working in unison.

The Minister of Finance, the Premier of this territory, said to us the first day we were in power — had our caucus together — that the first thing we have to do, when we were told where we were financially, was get our house in order financially be-



cause, without the financial wherewithal, nothing is going to happen in this territory.

Well, a job well done, and as we move forward with many of the projects we're doing today, as we look, there isn't a community in the territory that isn't touched by this government and these two departments: Highways and Public Works and Community Services. Again, I would like to thank the individuals in our communities who work on a daily basis — work in every community — and invariably, Mr. Speaker, are part and parcel of those communities. Community Services works diligently in our communities, not only in the City of Whitehorse, but throughout the territory, to make a better life for our Yukon communities. So, as we go forward in our discussions this afternoon, what was very interesting to me in Community Services was where we were going, which was important. I asked the department, "Where did we come from last year? What did we do in the last 365 days? What did the department do to make our lives — the lives of Yukoners — better and what did they do in the last 365 days?"

Well, it's astounding. The amount of work that was done in that department is astounding — lists and lists of things. They talk about lot development. The opposition talks about this budget — over \$40 million in land development in the territory — huge. Now, not all Whistle Bend — all our communities are going to be touched by that and we're working with our municipalities.

The Leader of the Opposition neglects to tell Yukoners that there is another partner in this and it's called the municipal government, and we work with that government to develop land in their communities, in the municipalities. The member opposite neglects to talk about that partnership.

As we move forward with the debate this afternoon, in Community Services alone, the homeowners grant — the members opposite voted against it — paid 7,500 Yukon households an average of \$415 each; 7,500 home owners got an average of \$415 in their homeowners grant index. This government did that. The opposition voted against those improvements.

Building Safety branch completed 5,200 inspections for building, plumbing, development, electrical, gas and boiler pressure vessels last year — 5,200 inspections by the Department of Community Services.

Motor vehicles — we issued 35,000 vehicle registrations and had over 25,000 active operator licences. Again, Community Services did that in the last year.

Last year, Community Services — this government — the first government to change the municipal partnership we had with our communities — transferred \$20.59 million to Yukon municipalities — \$20.9 million. It went into our communities. We operate 20 solid-waste sites in rural Yukon and we're committed — this government is committed to make sure that we reach the goal of no burning in the territory by the year 2012. That's what we're working toward now.

FireSmart was a project that the Liberals cancelled. Last year we created 28 projects all through Yukon communities. Of course, it helps to reduce fire risk. The Emergency Measures Organization supported eight volunteer search and rescue

teams and trained 50 Yukon government and community members in emergency management and incident command systems. Emergency Medical Services responded to 683 medevacs, 4,566 ambulance calls in Whitehorse and 1,307 calls in the communities.

This government did that under the Community Services department. We're working on 80 capital projects, infrastructure projects, throughout the Yukon. This government made the decision — another good-news story — that we're going to enhance our library, and how will we do that? In partnership with the Kwanlin Dun, we're building a brand new library to service the Whitehorse area.

Little did I know, until I became a spokesman for the department, the number of people who utilize our public libraries throughout the territory, but in the City of Whitehorse, that library is probably one of the most used public buildings in Whitehorse. I'm not counting the liquor store; I'm counting just the basic government departments on a daily basis. Our library is used extensively. That library will move to the new Kwanlin Dun cultural centre, be expanded and modernized.

Sports and Recreation in the Yukon: it annually funds 12 Yukon communities for community recreation, seven Yukon recreational groups, 29 sports governing bodies, 27 high performance, four elite athletes and four high-performance officials. Last year 98 Yukon athletes placed in the top three in national or international competition — 98 Yukoners out of a population of 35,000 people competed at national and international competitions and stood on the podium. That came out of the funding and the work that the sports and recreation department works on, on a daily basis.

Also, we are responsible for the fire seasons, Wildland Fire Management. It was the earliest starting season we had, which was a bit of a surprise because usually the fire season starts a little later in the year — we are talking again about last year — and 88 forest fires burned and 57 percent were caused by lightning — that is a statistic. I am just saying to the House here today that wildland fire is a very busy component of our Department of Community Services.

Infrastructure development — we are talking about lots and we are talking about communities throughout the territory. The Ingram subdivision in Whitehorse is now complete, making 43 single families, nine multi-families, eight duplexes and 72 townhouse lots available to Yukoners — again, work that came out of the Department of Community Services.

Construction of Whistle Bend, which we are working on in conjunction with the municipality: the connecting road is approximately 45 percent done. Clearing, grubbing and salvage of wood and all phase 1 and 2 roads are complete. The first set of lots is scheduled to be released in early 2012. Again, the work is proceeding and anybody who drives through that area will see the work that has been done in the past.

The Willow Acres subdivision in Haines Junction: it's going to have 27 country residential, 49 single family, three multi-family and two commercial lots — again working with our communities. Haines Junction is an example of getting lots out.

Seven Carcross waterfront projects are finished, including the most recent project, the *SS Tutshi* memorial, and four more projects are currently underway. In other words, Mr. Speaker, another commitment this government made was to enhance Carcross for the benefit not only of the tourist trade that comes through there, but for the residents in the Yukon. I recommend anybody in the House here or any Yukoner to go and take a tour of that investment in Carcross and you will certainly see the improvements there on the ground.

Now the Whitehorse waterfront projects — now there's an investment. No other government in the history of the territory has invested as much money on the waterfront in Whitehorse as this government. The members opposite don't talk about the waterfront. They ignore these things. But in fact, this government is putting the money on the ground on the waterfront. We invested in the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre. I went through the public library project. The contract has now been let for the wharf and for the rip-rap that's going in. That is a contract that will be let very shortly and we're looking forward to that project getting finished this summer.

The municipal rural infrastructure fund had 22 projects this year, including the CAFN cultural centre. It's being built in Haines Junction. I just saw progress on that and it's quite impressive. Thirteen projects are complete with the remainder to be finished before the end of 2012. Five communities will receive improved public water treatment systems. This is another thing this government has done. We are committed to upgrade our potable water operations throughout the territory.

So the communities that were touched last year are Ross River, Haines Junction, Teslin, Carcross and Marsh Lake. As we go through this, we'll find that we're investing in Old Crow and other communities as we move through the program to make sure all our potable water is up to Canadian standards.

Protective Services: the fire season of 2010 triggered 88 fires, as I said. Wildland Fire Management personnel and crews were successful. The fires last year started early but were also very intense. If it had continued, it would have meant the investment we had was more than we had to spend, but it woke me up to the fact as minister that these fires are very expensive.

The Ross River fire department took delivery of a brand new fire truck, a pumper, and that was \$309,000. Marsh Lake took delivery of a new \$185,000 pump tanker in October. These are many of the things we do on a yearly basis, as we upgrade the equipment in these communities and we're aware of the fact that modernization is very important.

The equipment has to be reliable and our community must be safe from fire. Wildland fire management is very, very important. I'd like to take a minute here — as the minister, I've met many of these volunteer firefighters throughout the territory, and I'd like to thank them here in the House for their hard work. We have a huge number of volunteers in our communities. It is absolutely amazing the number of people who volunteer in our communities and make our communities better places. Of course, the fire department is one place they volunteer — and also EMS. They work on the ambulances and help their fellow man in these communities. Without the volunteers in these communities, I'm not quite sure any government could

afford the cost to replace our volunteers. So, as the minister, I'd like to thank them, and I certainly appreciate anything they do.

Of course, we are building an integrated emergency response facility at the top of the Two Mile Hill. That's a commitment we've made and that will be started this year. That will be an ambulance, EMO — an integrated whole facility that will work for Yukoners long into the future. Of course, we are continually buying new ambulances and replacing our old ones.

Last year we bought three, and this year we have budgeted more ambulances. These are the things we do in managing government to make sure that these communities have the proper equipment.

As we move through this — and I find it interesting that somehow the Leader of the Official Opposition — if it's appropriate to say — would be one of the bigger offenders on this topic — that we have to balance things in the House here, and make sure that we represent all Yukoners in the House. I don't think we do ourselves any good by pointing fingers or doing whatever, but we have to make sure — Mr. Speaker, my job is to give the facts on the floor here. I have no room for flexibility on those facts.

The opposition has a responsibility, and part of that responsibility is to work with us as a government, as a member — independently or whatever — asking us questions on the department and coming up with a line of questioning that's appropriate. In turn, we listen to the reply to the budget.

It has no balance in it — when we are called just bad people or we are just whatever. But the fact is that is not what the Leader of the Official Opposition should be doing. He should be rolling out a blueprint for Yukoners on where that particular party or where the Third Party is going to take the Yukon.

We brought it here. We're fighting over a \$1-billion budget. When this government took over, we had a \$500-million budget — a \$500-million budget. We more than doubled it in nine years. How did we do that? We did it because we worked in partnership with the federal government, worked in partnership with the mining community — whatever — and, most importantly, we got devolution. Devolution was very important to the Yukon because devolution — regardless of what was in that document, in the sense that the Leader of the Official Opposition says we should be renegotiating because we only get so much money from our non-renewable resources.

In fact, we get 100 percent of \$3 million to start with, which I don't disagree with, but I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, we are talking to the federal government and have been talking to the federal government through our departments to do exactly what the member is talking about.

So when the insinuation is there that we're not doing anything — in fact, we are doing things to make sure we are treated in the same way as our neighbours.

Now, remember that the Northwest Territories don't get any of their resources until they get devolution, and they're working on devolution. I wish them all the luck in the world. It's a tough slog to get the thing done, but I wish them a speedy transfer to their own responsibility, because that's what it's all about.

It is about financial management. We can't blame other people now. We are the captain of our own ship. We have not only the good part about devolution, but the other side has to explain to Yukoners why things don't happen. Through our financial capabilities, the Yukon has never been more blessed with resources. You only have to go to the City of Dawson, Haines Junction — there have never been more schools built under any other government.

We're working on F.H. Collins. It's a huge investment, but this government is working on it to get it done, and we will get it done.

We will have a new F.H. Collins, like we have a new school in Carmacks. How many governments ignored the Carmacks school situation? Was anybody in the old school in Carmacks? Well, I was. That building should have been replaced 15 years ago; we replaced it. We made the commitment and got it done.

But as we move forward here, Community Services certainly has the responsibility to work within our communities. At the AYC meeting, I made an announcement that we were going out to review our — first of all, to give a little history to what I'm going to say, Mr. Speaker, three and one-half years ago, we talked to the municipalities about funding. They had not had a funding increase in about 10 or 15 years. We as a government — under the Minister of Health at that time — made a deal with them that we would increase the funding and that we would index it so they would have a guaranteed funding process for a five-year period. We're coming to the end of the five-year period. When I as minister went to Dawson and discussed with the municipalities, decided about how we would move forward, we, in conjunction with the Association of Yukon Communities and the municipalities — the best way to move forward was to put together a group of individuals, Association of Yukon Communities and ourselves and go out into our communities and talk to our municipalities and talk to the individuals in our communities.

Now, we did that. I haven't got the consolidated recommendations, but I have the recommendations from municipalities in front of me now and we're going to work on this new template of how the municipalities will be managed into the future. The municipalities not only have financial problems, but they also have other issues. How do they attract employees? What opportunity is there for municipalities to create their own wealth? What about the *Municipal Act* in itself? What about all these other questions that came out of this discussion? I was very impressed at the responses from our municipalities. It wasn't all about money. The money is one issue, but they have other issues. It was certainly a timely time to have that discussion. I'm looking forward to going to the Association of Yukon Communities in the coming year to announce a go-forward plan in conjunction with the group that's working with me, but it's going to be interesting because it's going to be an important day for our municipalities, and certainly addressing all the concerns of the communities is very important.

Certainly one of the bigger things we did was the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* and of course that was a two or three year process as we worked on how to manage the solid waste in

our communities. As you know, 2012 is the year that we have to have a no-burn policy. As I said earlier this afternoon, 2012 is the date to which we are committed to get out of burning. The *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* is working. There are a few issues out there, but we've actually got the transfer stations working and we're working with the communities. I feel that it's fairly positive and now we have to look at other areas. We've got the Dawson City area. We've got areas like Mayo — a lot of these solid-waste areas are being utilized by exploration crews. We've got the actual developing of mines happening. A lot of the burden of managing these solid-waste areas falls on the communities, so those things have to be addressed.

Also, it is important for us as a government, and certainly the department is aware of the responsibility — a lot of these dumps — these solid-waste areas — were transferred from the territorial government to the municipalities. When it comes to closure plans, when it comes to an environmental issue, how much of that responsibility is borne by the municipality and how much should the territorial government be responsible for? It is no different from our type 2 mine sites. What are we responsible for? What are they responsible for? That is a partnership where we will work with the municipalities. As the solid-waste areas are closed, they have to have a closure plan, and how much of that will be borne by the territorial government and how much by the municipality? Again, it's working in conjunction with the municipality itself. These are very, very important issues in the sense that they affect all our municipalities, and it's work in progress, but again I would like to thank the department because they have really come to the mark and done a great job of looking at this and being creative in how we're going to manage our solid waste into the future.

In 2010 for the Special Olympics Canadian summer games in London, Ontario, we sent 25 athletes, coaches and mission staff representing Yukon in four sports. It was our largest contingent ever to go out to represent the Yukon. They did a stellar job. We have contributed to the Hockey Day in Canada, which we're all going to celebrate this coming weekend — another great investment in the municipality that is hosting them. We've contributed resources to that too, and I'm looking forward to it.

The government is very conscious of the rural electrical program, which was always in place, and how people access energy, which was always in place. There were 63 projects completed or are in progress under the rural electrification program to provide electricity and telecommunications services to Yukon. In other words, that was just last year: 63 projects.

To date this is the project that we instituted as a government — 105 projects have been completed and 42 are in progress under the rural domestic water well program to ensure Yukoners have access to safe, potable water. That's something this government did and that has been taken up by the communities or by the rural areas with 105 projects and the 42 that are in progress.

So as you can see, the Department of Community Services is a fairly busy department. That's what I want to say in the House here: if we know where we're going, we have to know where we came from. That department — whether it's sports,

wildland fire and all the things that happen in the department — I would like to compliment them on their hard work.

I have only a few more minutes — 40 minutes to talk about two of the bigger departments.

Highways and Public Works: the most important thing that this government did was put together that capital plan on how we were going to move forward into the future. One of the biggest problems we had as a government was the restriction on how we managed capital projects. In other words, our contracting community didn't know from year to year where we were going to go.

This capital plan that the Minister of Finance has put on the floor here today and looks forward to implementing as it passes will be the map — will be a plan for our investments on into the future — 2015. As you can see if you look at that — F.H. Collins school will be ongoing and all of these other projects — but the contracting community can look at that and say to themselves, this is the work that's going to happen over the next period of time.

Now, that doesn't encompass all the work that the territorial government does. For the smaller contracts and contractors that we work with on a yearly basis, we put some resources in place so that they can count on \$12 million a year in contracts that are small and maintenance orientated. So the smaller guy can count on those investments on the ground. That again, in itself, is a new way of looking at how we manage our budget so that the community knows where we're going.

You only have to drive around the territory to see what's being invested. The Campbell Highway — \$33 million over three years. This is the last year. Yukon Zinc will have access to the Alaska Highway and that's because we invested in the Campbell Highway. If you go up north, the Atlin Road will be invested in and the upgrades to the Atlin Road will be drawing to an end. We've been working on that for years.

There's the issue about bridge maintenance and bridge building; culvert maintenance — all these things that government does on a daily basis, yearly basis. The Nisutlin River bridge — we've got to put a go-forward plan on the Nisutlin River bridge. It's the longest bridge in our inventory in the territory, so we're going to invest in that as we move forward.

In closing, again I'd like to thank my constituents who work with me on a daily, weekly basis. I hear from them on a regular basis and that's what it's all about. That's my job. I'd like to thank the departments that I've had the pleasure to work with over the last nine years, whether it's Energy, Mines and Resources, whether it's Highways and Public Works, or Community Services — they've done a stellar job for us as a government and, in turn, have done a stellar job for the Yukon.

The Department of Finance, which has worked with the federal government to put together the budgets we have today and working with the Minister of Finance to see where we could maximize spending the resources.

The Yukon Energy Corporation, for investing in Mayo B — a recommendation from the Leader of the Official Opposition that it was a bad investment, but any time you can tie in two grids and be able to manage your power throughout the territory, that's a good move.

I'd like to thank the hospital board for working on our two new hospitals. Remember, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition never brings that up, but we've had a hospital in Watson Lake since the 1960s. I lived in Watson Lake 22 years. Somehow we're building a hospital that doesn't exist — we're replacing the hospital in Watson Lake because it's tired. We're going to build a new hospital there to serve that area.

Dawson City is a growing community. How do you expect people to move to Dawson City without a hospital? We're putting the investments on the ground; this government has done it in the past and we'll do it in the future. Today I think it's a great day for the Yukon. You only have to walk outside to feel the excitement in the air, the building that's going on, the investment on the ground. It looks like progress to my eyes, and I think Yukoners will make that decision in the fall when we go to the people.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking of being tired, I think the government may be a little tired. It is indeed a pleasure to be here today to respond to the government's ninth budget. I think that before I start I would like to first of all say a few words about my riding. I would like to thank the voters in my riding, my constituents, for their continued support, for their advice, and for the fellowship that they provide on a regular basis. When attending community events or running into them on the street, they always have something positive to say about the work that I am doing and I appreciate that. I have really enjoyed working with the local advisory council, the Mount Lorne Community Association, Wolf Creek Community Association, Mary Lake Community Association and the Mount Lorne volunteer fire department.

They have all been willing to work together, to bring their concerns to me so that I can represent them here in the Legislative Assembly. They are a very dedicated group of individuals who provide an important service to their community. I think that all too often we don't recognize that. They have very concise insights into the needs of their communities. That's why it's important as MLAs that we stay connected with those associations and groups, as well as with individual constituents.

I know that in going around door-to-door in the last little while, I've heard a number of positive things about the work that I've done here in the Legislative Assembly, as well as some comments about what it is they expect government to do for Yukon and what their vision is for the Yukon. Interestingly enough it doesn't always match up with what we hear from the government.

I would like to say that I am looking forward, after the next election, to continuing to work with the community association and the local advisory council not just in Mount Lorne, but in Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake. I feel really confident about the fact that their issues, the issues that I am hearing from people in those communities now and what I have heard over the years, are not dissimilar to the issues that I have raised here in the Legislative Assembly over the past eight and a half years.

So I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to work with those groups and those individuals in those communities. I feel really passionate about issues like local government and

ensuring that people's voices are heard, who are there to provide advice, who go to their constituents, and they have the ability to make decisions about their communities and provide advice to the Minister of Community Services and other departments about what needs to take place in their community. The important thing is that government has to listen to those people. What I hear consistently a lot of the time is that government is not listening all the time.

My constituents in the Mount Lorne area and in Wolf Creek and Mary Lake feel that government hasn't listened enough to some of the issues they have. I want to touch briefly — there are some positive things in the budget for my riding and there are a lot of positive things that have happened in our community. When I look at the Mount Lorne community centre and the changes that have taken place over there, the building of the three-season structure, the timber-frame building, the improvements to the community centre itself, the recent building of the shed to house the Zamboni more appropriately and provide the infrastructure there — they have all been greatly appreciated.

Improvements to the highways — there's a lot of work that has been done on various stretches of road within the riding over the years, resurfacing and whatnot. There have been concerns about how some of that work is done and whether or not we're actually getting good value for the taxpayers' dollars that are being spent. I've heard concerns about highway safety on the Annie Lake Road with the recent improvements, where the road surface was upgraded but then it deteriorated really quickly and my constituents have been experiencing problems with their vehicles because of the rough road surface.

Highway safety on the Alaska Highway continues to be an issue. It's an issue that I raised many times during the construction of the Whitehorse Copper or Mount Sima subdivision and there are concerns about the infrastructure that has been put in place to address the various entrances to those subdivisions, as well as excessive speeds, high congestion at various times, as well as numerous accidents, including a tragic accident that happened last fall.

Other concerns that fall into some of the categories for which I am the critic include land planning. That goes to all areas of the riding. It goes to the planning of the Whitehorse Copper subdivision in years previous. It has been an issue in Marsh Lake that I've raised here in the Legislative Assembly. The government has been slow to respond, but I understand that they are responding. The residents of Mount Lorne have been asking the Minister of Community Services and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for the last three years to review the land plan. To date, they've received no satisfaction. Land planning is a very important issue in this territory, as we know from the process in north Yukon and the process that's currently in its final stages around the Peel land planning commission.

It's an important issue in all communities that we plan how we develop land, how we are all going to survive and live together on the land here in the territory. We need to ensure that adequate resources are in the budget, because we all have an impact on the land. Development has an impact on the land,

and we need to be cognizant of the traditional uses, the need for wildlife habitat and environmental protection. We need to work together as communities and show leadership as government during these processes. I could go on about a number of other items, but I want to talk for a little while about the budget.

The government has indicated that they are going to table a budget that projects a \$38.5-million surplus. What we have seen over the past number of years is what I would term "phantom surpluses". The credibility of the government on delivering that surplus is very lacking.

What we've seen in the past is where the government has predicted surpluses, we've actually — with supplementary budgets and special warrants — seen those become deficits. The result is that the savings account in 2006-07 totalled a little over \$200,000; at the end of the current fiscal year that we're in, it will be only \$18 million.

I think the reason there is a problem with credibility is that if you look at past budgets, you will see a steady increase — and rightfully so — in a number of departments where there has been an increase in O&M costs. For some reason the government this year believes that they can actually decrease operation and maintenance spending across government by close to \$10 million. It's going to be difficult, I believe, for the government to do this. We've already heard a little bit about this, although the government was quick to respond — the cuts to mental health services, and we are still uncertain, to be honest with you, about exactly what the government's intentions are, whether it is for one year or what the actual commitment is on the part of government for those services. By cutting the O&M budget, what services to Yukoners will no longer be available?

The other thing that has remained steady over the years is what we see as a continued dependency on the federal government, and not much has changed over all those years in our own-source revenues. Despite consecutive billion dollar budgets — the Premier likes to talk about the financial capacity or fiscal capacity that has been increased, but a lot of it has been reliant on stimulus funding from the federal government — programs like Building Canada, the MRIF and the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund, stimulus funds and the money that was provided for projects like Mayo B and close to \$100 million or more for housing initiatives here in the territory. I believe that this budget is an election budget and no doubt they heard some criticism from within their own ranks that they had been running deficits and that they had to show that they were going to have a surplus. Thus, they presented yet another surplus budget, which we believe will not actually come to pass.

We're very pleased with a number of things that are in the budget. The Premier, in his Budget Address, in a number of instances talked about the opposition voting against it. We heard the same rhetoric from the Minister of Community Services and Highways and Public Works. We have to realize, and members on the other side have to realize, that just because we on this side of the House don't vote for the budget, it doesn't mean we don't support a large number of initiatives in the budget, because there is a lot of good that's done. There are a lot of projects that are necessary. It's about having a vision and staying in touch with what it is that Yukoners want and not

going out and initiating large projects without consulting Yukoners — such as hospitals, as in Dawson City.

The other area I have some concerns about is with the way that projects like those are managed. I'd like to go back just a little bit to the revenue side and the fact that the government is still not looking at increasing and maximizing own-source revenue. So part of that is a taxation issue, and with all the economic activity — the increase in mineral exploration and mining activity — how could we retain more of that here in the territory? Well, we could retain more of it if we weren't flying workers in and out of the territory. This is something that's common in the north. To start with, we need to look at our tax regime. That would be one way of doing it — to see how we can retain a portion of the taxes that would be paid if those people were actually living here in the territory.

A better way to get around that would be to ensure that there was adequate housing so that Whitehorse or other communities in the Yukon, like Faro or Dawson City or Mayo, could become those hubs and that people could actually live in those communities and commute to some of those projects. They could actually make their lives here, contribute to those communities, earn their living, and pay taxes here in the Yukon, instead of paying taxes in other jurisdictions in southern Canada.

I know the Premier took huge offence last fall when he thought I was talking about people sheltering their money in some offshore bank account in the Bahamas when I raised this issue. He didn't understand the issue.

Revenue royalties — there has been a lot of talk about that recently and changing the devolution transfer agreement to increase the threshold. But the reality is that we've never reached that cap, at least not in the time I've sat in this Legislative Assembly — where there has been that many royalties in the territory around land and minerals.

If you look at the current budget figures, when you look at revenues from lands, mining and forestry licences, it is \$1.3 million that is projected. The oil and gas revenue is \$115,000 and the royalties are \$187,000.

I honestly believe we need to look at the royalty regime because, in contrast to the figures I just quoted — I don't have the figures in front of me, but I recall it wasn't that long ago that the Minto mine announced a large royalty payment to the Selkirk First Nation. They just announced that they paid off all the money they owed Yukon Energy Corporation. So there is money to be made in mining and mineral extraction. They're doing quite well, thank you.

It's the difference between a royalty regime based on profits, which is what the Yukon government has, or a royalty regime based on net smelter return, which is what was negotiated with the Selkirk First Nation.

Not to dwell on this too much, but I want to also point out that the royalties for placer gold currently are 2.5 percent of the value of gold and, for the purpose of that, gold is valued at \$15 per ounce. This was set up many, many years ago — over 100 years ago — which means that the Yukon public, the taxpayers, received 37.5 cents per ounce for gold when we all know that gold currently is selling at over \$1,300 per ounce today. I think

that it is not too much to expect or too much to ask, and I think Yukoners deserve to get more for the resources that are being extracted from the territory.

The other thing that comes out of all of the activity here in the Yukon and this is part of the reason why there is some strain on the operation and maintenance budgets of the Department of Health and Social Services and a social strain added with all of the activity.

What we're seeing, or what we have seen is an increase in social assistance payments — more strain put on because of the lack of availability of affordable housing and housing for those who are hard to house. We also see strains on supports for addictions treatment. By contrast, if you look at the revenues in the budget, when it comes to addressing the need for addictions treatment, you can contrast the revenues that I spoke of earlier with the revenues that the government receives through the Yukon Liquor Corporation. The liquor tax is \$3.9 million. The profit is \$8.9 million. We receive \$12.85 million altogether from liquor revenue and taxes and yet we still continue to struggle with providing services to those who struggle with drug and alcohol addictions.

So in what we've seen, the government's response is to put a sobering centre — an assessment centre — at the correctional facility and to further criminalize this activity. It's not a criminal activity; it's a health problem; it's an addiction. It's like a disease and we need to treat it. We don't need to treat these people like criminals.

I would like to touch on a few of the areas of responsibility that I have as far as critic areas in relation to the budget, before my time expires. In the area of Community Services, there are many good projects that we support; a lot of those coming out of the municipal rural infrastructure fund and Building Canada fund that are funded on a percentage basis with the territorial government and, in some cases, the municipalities.

There are important projects for the health and safety of all Yukoners in communities — water and sewer projects in Yukon communities that ensure that there's good, safe drinking water and sewage treatment facilities that protect both the groundwater and our rivers and lakes.

There's continued work on the waterfront both in Carcross and in Whitehorse and the addition of the Kwanlin Dun cultural centre on the waterfront is most welcome. I look forward to seeing other developments on the waterfront, both by the government and by the private sector. I think having those projects there now will encourage the private sector to also invest there. I've been in Carcross a number of times recently and I've seen the improvements that are being made there and I know that they are greatly appreciated in that community. The improvements at the Tutshi interpretive centre — the new visitor reception or welcoming facility that's there — the carving facility, the bridge and the boat launch are all welcome additions to the waterfront in Carcross.

I notice as well in the budget in some of the details — this is a very important piece in rural Yukon, both in the riding that I currently represent and in the riding that I'm looking forward to representing — and that is volunteer firefighters. I've presented some ideas to the government. They haven't taken me

up on them with regard to further supports for volunteer fire-fighters in the area of taxation. The government decided not to pursue with the federal government some of those changes. But I notice in the budget that there is half a million dollars for the Mount Lorne volunteer fire department for an addition. That will be a much welcomed addition. I hope that the minister and his officials will consult with the chief and the members of the volunteer fire department to ensure that the facility that is built meets their needs.

I recognize that design has just started on this project and I look forward to seeing it completed. I would also like to point out to the minister that the purpose of such an addition is to house the equipment and provide training areas. This will allow them to park all of the vehicles, hopefully, within the structure. One thing that they are in need of out there is a tanker as the tanker that they currently have is unserviceable. It is not road-worthy, so they have to rely on the mutual aid agreement and there would have to be tankers coming from Carcross or Golden Horn if there was a fire and they needed the support.

I would like to talk a little bit about the *Municipal Act*. The minister spoke a bit about that and the need to look at the way municipalities are funded and maybe even look at the *Municipal Act*. I would encourage him and say that, yes, that's what needs to happen. That's what we've been trying to tell him for quite awhile now. We need to increase citizen participation in the democratic process and not what we've seen where municipalities and citizens end up in court. When it comes to education, we've seen a number of projects go through under this government — one being the education reform project. There were a lot of good recommendations in that report. I continue to hear of governance being an issue in communities where they want to have a say in the design and delivery of education for their children. They're not seeing that. We need to make more improvements in how we devolve that decision-making power to the citizens in the community about what happens in their school, allow them more participation and more say about the education of their children.

Now the minister who was just speaking — the Minister of Community Services — talked about building schools in Carmacks and the F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement. I would just like to remind the member that it was NDP governments that built more schools than any other governments in this territory and made that commitment to educational infrastructure in many communities — all communities here in the Yukon.

What I would say about the F.H. Collins school project — I heard in Question Period today that it looks like the government has decided to take a little more of a go-slow approach to that replacement. I don't know where the engineering and design is on that project, but I know there's a need for a school there. I can respect that there is a need to get the engineering and the design right.

We have seen it before with the way the government approached building a health care centre in Watson Lake — which later turned out to be a hospital. There was a lot of work, a lot of money spent that ended up having to be redone and more design work done. So it is important to get it right the

first time. Fast tracking is not an appropriate way to go on many of these projects. Another project we can cite in this area is the Whitehorse Correctional Centre. The government did absolutely nothing around the correctional facility during its first mandate. Then in this last mandate, all of a sudden it became a priority and they fast-tracked it. Despite the fact that the minister still continues to say that it is on time and on budget, I am having a hard time believing it. The minister and the government should talk to some of the people who are actually working on the project.

There is much work that's being done and then redone and torn out and done again. As somebody who has worked on construction projects similar to this, like Yukon College — large construction projects — it's very easy, when you take this approach, to fast-track a project without the appropriate engineering and design work done up front to bring it in on time and on budget. So I have serious concerns about that project.

I know my time is running out. There are a number of areas that I would like to speak about. One is Yukon Housing Corporation. We've seen the capital budget decline. They spent a lot of money over a number of years on what they called "affordable housing". It was affordable housing for seniors. There was money spent on social housing.

Despite all of the money that was spent, we still have long wait-lists for social housing. We still have a large population of people who are hard to house, who are left out — people with disabilities, people with addictions, people who also have difficulty finding employment. They are being left out, and they don't have housing. So despite all the millions and the increase that the minister talked about, we don't have the housing problem solved yet.

An emergency youth shelter — it is a travesty that this government — we have been raising this issue repeatedly, repeatedly, year after year. I have to ask a question about an emergency youth shelter for young people who are at risk, who are selling their bodies on the streets for a place to stay or for drugs or whatever. They need support; they need an environment where they can feel welcome and assisted. I would like to touch briefly on some comments — because I just can't let them go — that the Premier mentioned in his budget speech.

He talked about the all-party committee process. I can't let this go at this point because I'm a little too close to it probably. But all-party committees started out and there was great success. The *Smoke-free Places Act* was an example of what this Legislature can do. It's positive for Yukoners. But when I look at the list that the Premier spoke about — he spoke about human rights legislation. We made some progress there, but the government is dragging its feet on bringing forward some of the recommendations that were actually made.

Whistle-blower protection — that's a disaster from my perspective. We have spent almost four years working on it and we can't even get a meeting to finalize a report. When we do try to give the recommendations to the public, we're told that we can't do that.

The *Landlord and Tenant Act* was a good process and we came up with a good report. The government agreed that we needed to make the changes and we needed to make them fast.

Now, the government is hiding behind further consultation in order to drag their feet. Bill No. 108, *Legislative Renewal Act* — I was asked a year ago to put my name forward — or who would sit on the committee, and we have heard absolutely nothing from the government.

So, while we can talk about the budget and the finances and all that, what's really underlying this budget is the democratic deficit. It's the ability of members on that side of the House to listen to members on this side of the House and to the public in general. There is a lack of trust and there is a lack of vision. It's a vision that doesn't reflect what Yukoners are telling us on this side of the House. I would encourage the members of the governing party to get out a little more, talk to Yukoners on the street, and find out what it is that Yukoners really want. Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I rise today to support this budget. Before I go into talking about the budget, I would like to thank my constituents of Pelly-Nisutlin. It is an honour to serve you. The last four and a half years have gone by so quickly.

I have enjoyed travelling to the communities of Ross River, Faro and Teslin. I have made many lasting friendships, which have added so much to the quality of my life. These have been exciting times and I am pleased that I have been able to play a part in advancing the quality of life of these communities and of Yukon as a whole.

When we are making decisions, I think of the impact our decisions will have on individuals in my riding as well as the Yukon in total. I continue my open-door policy. I do enjoy seeing constituents who come in with issues or just stop to say hello.

I would like to take a few minutes to discuss what we have accomplished here today and how this budget before us is part of a broader plan of sound management of this government.

In 2006 we went to the people and asked for their support to implement our vision, which was built upon four major pillars. We have delivered, contrary to what the opposition says to the negative. We have indeed delivered.

In today's Yukon, we have rekindled the economy. Unemployment is at a historic low. Our population is increasing. Property values are back on the rise. The Yukon government's financial health is among the best jurisdictions in Canada. The Yukon is poised to continue its advance on the pathway of growth and prosperity by continuing the vision and direction that began with the election of the Yukon Party in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, let me impart what this means to the Yukon as a whole. We transformed the economy we inherited in 2002 from being one of the weakest economies in Canada, with people fleeing the Yukon in droves to find work, to now, in actuality, being the strongest economy in Canada, with a gross domestic product of 3.9 percent in 2009.

Increased mining exploration and development in 2002 went from less than \$10 million to \$410 million in 2010. Let me repeat that number, Mr. Speaker, as I find it simply amaz-

ing. We went from less than \$10 million in 2002 to \$410 million in 2010.

Under the Liberals, Yukon ranked 35 out of 45 jurisdictions in the world as a good place to invest, whereas today, under our watch, Yukon ranks fourth out of 51 jurisdictions in the world. Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the Official Opposition and the Third Party that world mineral prices are the same around the world. That means that Yukon's climb to the top of the ranking has absolutely nothing to do with world mineral prices; it has everything to do with us — this government — making the changes necessary to restore investor confidence in Yukon.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** You know, actually, women do have a working brain in our head; we don't need men to write our speeches for us, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Official Opposition speaks of mortgaging the future. Under their watch, no one was willing to give a mortgage — sour grapes, methinks — and speaking of not pretty, the Liberals are anxious to get their mitts on the keys again. Remember the last time Yukoners let them drive? In a very historically short period of time, they put the economy in the ditch and lost the keys. The Liberals fell asleep at the wheel. It was the Yukon Party that had the pluck and the dexterity to dig us out and got us on the road again.

We have achieved a great deal during the last two terms and, speaking of ditches in a more positive manner, we have \$700,000 for brushing work in this year's budget. The Leader of the Official Opposition likes to tell folks that Yukon's turnaround happened in spite of the Yukon Party being in power. Let's put this in perspective: it happened because of this government, in spite of all the criticism from the opposition. In 2002, the main concern facing Yukoners was the economy. Now it's finding employees and a place to house them in Yukon. We have taken steps to improve the viability of the mining sector in the economy.

Yukon's population has increased by approximately 4,500 people since 2002. We have turned Yukon's double-digit unemployment rate in 2002 to 4.4 percent in December 2010 — the lowest in Canada — but Yukon's economy is not based on a single sector.

We have focused efforts on economic diversification by promoting national resource development, tourism, trade, arts and culture, film and sound, research and development, information technology, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, trapping and outfitting and small business.

The economy in my riding is dependent on tourism and mining. I am voting yes for this budget because it will help build the economy in my riding through programs like Destination: Yukon, which builds upon tourism marketing momentum generated by the 2007 Look Up North marketing campaign and the 2010 Pan North Marketing Consortium Olympic marketing initiative. We had \$700,000 in 2011-12 for the tourism cooperative marketing fund, \$350,000 for the scenic drives initiative, and \$125,000 for Tourism and Culture's interactive website. Speaking of tourists, to help attract them to the region and to help export our resources, we are investing \$7.313 million



for work on the Campbell Highway. That is in addition to the \$1 million for Ross River community road upgrades. In this budget is \$100,000 for resource planning in the Ross River traditional area.

We have \$926,000 set aside for Teslin road upgrades. There is \$402,000 for grader station and environmental upgrades at Swift River and Carcross. We have \$2.3 million for deck replacement for the Morley River bridge. We have \$400,000 for the Faro airport terminal building replacement.

In 2011-12, Yukon will be receiving a total of \$25.217 million to remediate type 2 mine sites that remain the responsibility of Canada, of which \$20.507 million is for the Faro mine; \$3.761 million is for further waste water treatment in three communities including Teslin; \$6.847 million is for water and sewer pipe replacement, water system upgrades, water treatment, reservoirs, wellhead protection and other water-related infrastructure improvements in Faro and other communities.

Because arsenic is a particular concern in Yukon drinking water due to regulatory standard changes in 2011-12, funding is being provided for arsenic treatment in Ross River. Upgrades to meet 2011 regulatory requirements in Teslin and other communities — we have \$100,000 for Teslin phase 2 arsenic treatment. Something the opposition forgets to mention: did you know that only two jurisdictions in Canada — Yukon and Alberta — have no debt? That is something not mentioned in this House by the opposition. As the Minister of Finance stated, this is a \$1,089,000,000 budget. While that is a very large number — and I know it's hard for the Liberal leader to imagine a figure that large — I won't go further into that. I am pleased that Yukon's private sector is fast approaching parity with government in contributing to the growth of our economy.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it's a balanced budget. We are replenishing our savings account with a \$38.456 million surplus and a net financial position of \$43.137 million. We went to work with Yukoners and developed a five-year capital plan with the following expenditures by category for 2011-12: \$37.451 million for building assets; \$46.6 million for transportation infrastructure; \$10.873 million for IT assets, inclusive of school-based IT requirements; \$66.99 million for municipal infrastructure supported by Building Canada funds; \$27.349 million, other projects and programming; and \$41.921 million for land development.

I want to talk about some of the consultations and partnerships that we've developed. We've completed the education reform project in 2008 and developed a new vision for education in Yukon entitled, "New Horizons: Honouring our Commitment to the Future." We developed the Government of Yukon climate change strategy in 2006 that led to the creation of the climate change action plan in 2009.

We established the Yukon Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence at Yukon College in October 2009. We developed the energy strategy for Yukon in concert with the Climate Change Action Plan. This led to the \$160-million project connecting the Whitehorse-Aishihik-Faro grid to the Mayo-Dawson grid through the Carmacks to Stewart Crossing transmission line and upgrading the Mayo dam known as Mayo B. We developed the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* in 2009. One

of the most significant challenges faced by jurisdictions across Canada relates to the area of health care. We conducted the Yukon health care review in 2008 that examines the sustainability of Yukon's health care system over the next decade. My colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, shared with me the dollar value of the request for new funding that he had received in a week's time. That amount left me staggering.

What we have done is make focused, strategic investments. We have developed the wellness strategy focusing on children and youth, healthy aging and social inclusion.

As Minister of Justice I want to note that we concluded the corrections consultation in 2006, which led to the adoption of a new philosophy of corrections that emphasizes the protection of the public, holds offenders accountable and provides appropriate opportunities for rehabilitation. This new philosophy underpins our new *Corrections Act* and all our new facilities such as the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, the women's annex and land-based treatment opportunities.

Importantly for me, in both my ministerial roles as the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and the Minister of Justice, is that we also developed *Victims of Crime Strategy* and the *Victims of Crime Act*. We have just recently concluded a major consultation that reviewed Yukon's police force. This is a major step forward, and I am pleased with the recommendations. I would like to acknowledge our partnership with the RCMP and Yukon First Nations. Mr. Speaker, this review was extensive and exhaustive in its consultations but let me be very clear, we wanted the review to be more than particular incidents. We wanted the review to look at systemic structural images as well.

The secure assessment centre will be a new annex off the new Correctional Centre. The RCMP's workload related to holding prisoners would be done by Corrections branch officials. The RCMP deals with intoxicated people on a daily basis who require detainment and make the duty of care and safe handling very challenging. It takes an RCMP officer off duty to book and detain someone taken to the holding cells. This is a very significant time that they are taken away from the streets. I believe it is something like four hours. The centre will provide a combination of secure, short-term accommodation with medical assessment staff and specifically trained security guards and possibilities for short-term case management. Everyone, especially the acutely intoxicated, will receive a higher standard of medical assessment and supervision. Another positive result will be that the RCMP will focus on policing activities. I would like to point out that we made it very clear when we announced our plans for the new Correctional Centre that it would be a multi-purpose facility.

We are working to ensure Yukoners receive the best possible policing services available. By working together, we can make that possible. We can do better. This is a real opportunity to build a stronger relationship with the public; more specifically, the First Nation community. The review has not only revealed problems or gaps in service; it provided distinct recommendations that can be seen by the public as effective. We can have a renewed relationship in policing. Positive change is beneficial to all concerned. We are fortunate in having a com-

manding officer such as Peter Clark who has a history of making change by his very nature and his very inclusive way of dealing with things.

Let me just mention a few items related to my ministerial portfolios. I will speak to them in more detail during our Committee of the Whole deliberations. Almost \$11 million is provided annually to support activities of non-government organizations such as Kaushee's Place in Whitehorse and Help and Hope in Watson Lake. I want to thank my Cabinet colleagues for standing with me and supporting my request for funding to support women.

The members opposite like to portray themselves as the champions of the disadvantaged. It was under the Liberals and the NDP that the 28-day treatment complex was shut down. It was this government who opened it again. Given that substance abuse is a leading cause of social disorder in Yukon and that women often bear the brunt of that disorder, I'm very pleased that our government reversed that decision and once again put in place programming to help people with substance abuse issues. It was under the watch of the opposition that the Women's Directorate was collapsed as a stand-alone unit. One of the very first actions this government took when we came into office in 2002 was to re-establish the Women's Directorate. I have a bright pink pin that I was given and that I wear with pride that says, "Save the Women's Directorate". That was when it was collapsed. Save it we did. We reinstated it and we enhanced its role, too. The Women's Directorate, I should mention, has an expansive library which can be utilized by anyone who wishes to drop in and chat with the staff.

We are funding the women's equality fund for \$300,000 per year from 2010-13. We also fund the following groups — they receive WEF funding for 2010-13: the Elizabeth Fry Society Yukon, Les Essentielles, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Yukon Association for Community Living, Yukon Status of Women Council and Yukon Women in Trades and Technology.

The members opposite are going to pound their chest and profess they support women's organizations, but every year I've been here, they have voted against funding in our budgets.

The sad reality is that aboriginal women in the north experience violence at disproportionate rates to other parts of Canada. In 2004, our government set up the prevention of violence against aboriginal women fund. Following an evaluation of this fund, we then doubled it. Since 2004, the Yukon government, through the Women's Directorate, has contributed approximately \$900,000 toward this fund.

I want to thank Canada and Yukon Housing Corporation for their work in making our new Whitehorse affordable family complex a reality. I sincerely appreciate their assistance and partnership in helping address a long-standing need in our community.

We also have \$7.414 million in the budget to complete the construction of the new Whitehorse Correctional Centre, which is on time and on budget.

We have \$486,000 for implementation of *Victims of Crime Strategy*; \$3.58 million for a new secure assessment centre and

\$382,000 from the community development trust fund for the Northern Institute of Social Justice.

As the MLA for the riding of Pelly-Nisutlin, one of my major priorities was to address the needs of elders and seniors in my communities. Under our watch we have doubled and indexed the Yukon seniors income supplement. We also increased and indexed the pioneer utility grant. We pledged to complete the construction of the multi-level care facility in Watson Lake and Dawson City and the seniors facility in Haines Junction. We committed to continue to increase the inventory of affordable housing for seniors and elders in the Yukon, and we have done just that and much more.

We have new seniors facilities in both Faro and Teslin. Mr. Speaker, you bet we're taking care of our seniors and elders in Yukon. We said that we would build seniors and elders housing that enables couples with different medical needs to continue to live together as long as possible.

I would like to talk about some of the services and improvements related to youth in my riding. We have increased childcare subsidies; increased the Yukon child benefit; increased and indexed rates paid to foster parents; youth rebate under business incentive programs was extended indefinitely and we trained Yukoners for Yukon opportunities through dramatically increasing the number of registered apprentices.

As a government, we have funded different youth initiatives in each of the communities in my riding. As an MLA representing three smaller communities, I am especially interested in finding ways to make them more attractive places for our young people to remain. That means finding ways to help people find meaningful employment opportunities and improving the quality of life.

I like the sense of community that one finds in a place like Teslin. Teslin is my home. Pelly-Nisutlin is my riding.

We are putting money into highways — \$15.250 million this year as part of a three-year program to upgrade the Robert Campbell Highway that is very important to my riding, which depends on tourism.

We have \$500,000 for brushing along the Robert Campbell Highway. We have culvert and bridge work at Dead Man's Creek, Morley River, Quiet Lake, rehabilitation on a bridge on the North Canol Road.

Education and Tourism and Culture — Yukon-wide, we have accomplished much. We created a pan-northern approach with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to deal with the provincial and federal governments that resulted in significant benefits for all three territories, like the territorial health access fund and the territorial health system sustainability initiative.

We succeeded in getting the reinstatement of the all-important territorial formula funding agreement, a file the Liberals badly fumbled.

We took over the management responsibility for the care and maintenance of the Faro mine complex in early March of 2009. As a First Nation beneficiary, I find it frustrating to hear the members opposite complain when we follow the treaties. We spent years — decades — negotiating these treaties and the Official Opposition wants us to throw them out and cook up a new process; I think not. They tried that before in the Yukon

protected areas strategy and it was a convoluted mess. Why not just follow all that the three parties have agreed to in the treaties?

As the MLA for Faro, I am keenly interested in seeing the site in Faro — the mine — thoroughly addressed and I am pleased that this work is going ahead. We signed a labour market development agreement with Canada on July 8, 2009.

We have the licensed practical nurse program. Mr. Speaker, speaking of the licensed practical nurse program, as a rural member I applaud this government for recognizing that those of us who live outside of Whitehorse also need medical care and that we are taking steps to improve the availability of those services. I appreciate the fact that when someone needs medical care, they have the option of seeking it closer to home. I think this is a major upgrade over the situation we inherited in 2002.

I think our medical services in the Yukon, and what is available in Teslin, have improved so much since I was a child, and I think that we are truly blessed to be able to live in the Yukon and receive the services that we do.

I just want to make the point that we have worked very hard as a government to ensure that Yukon communities are taken care of. I think one of the benefits of having people who have lived in communities outside of Whitehorse at the Cabinet table is that we understand the challenges facing our smaller communities.

In partnership with Yukon Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services, we built a new housing complex for single-parent families. To have healthy families, healthy communities and a healthier Yukon, we must have healthy women. Each one of us must take responsibility to stop violence against women. We might think that we will not make a difference, that it would be just the proverbial drop in the bucket, but by working together we can make a difference and each drop in the bucket will fill that bucket.

My time is running short so I will not go into further detail, but I will just summarize. We have accomplished much and we are proud of our record of accomplishment. We have rebuilt the economy; private sector employment investment is up. We have re-established Yukon as a place to do business. We have matched our progress on the economic front with our advances on the social side of the ledger. Look at the cover on our new operation and maintenance and capital estimates: there is a scale that is balanced, and that is exactly what we have done. We have balanced this budget.

I see the opposition is very excited about this and they are smiling — they are very happy. As the MLA for Pelly-Nisutlin, I am pleased that this budget means so much for my riding in terms of jobs for our residents, support for our municipalities and services for our communities. The Teslin Tlingit Council is now in the process of training citizens as heavy equipment operators to take advantage of the opportunities now in Yukon.

As the Minister of Justice and the minister responsible for the Women's Directorate, I'm gratified that this budget contains funding to carry on our good work — not only funding and resources for women's groups and services, but also resources for our many changes to the correctional system, in-

cluding the new multi-purpose treatment and correctional facility, the development of a secure assessment centre and support for victims of crime.

Will I be supporting this budget? You bet I will. I will be supporting this budget and I encourage all members of the Legislature to join me. Kudos to the Premier and this government for good management of funds. That's our job.

**Mr. Elias:** On behalf of the great Vuntut Gwitchin riding and the community of Old Crow, let me express my deep gratitude for the privilege of addressing this Assembly today. Firstly, I want to thank my wife and my children, my friends and family and all of my constituents for standing by my side and believing in me during the last four years plus as the MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin.

Secondly, I stand here today to salute my constituents who have passed away during my term thus far as MLA. Among them, Ethel Frost, John Ross Tizya, Isaac Thomas, Florence Thomas, John Peter Tizya, Mary Netro, Tabitha Kyikcavichik, Geraldine Nukon, Martha Mary Elias-Kendi, Dr. Reverend Ellen Bruce, Gino Charlie, Annie Lord, Charlie Peter Charlie Sr., Lydia Thomas, Helen Elaine Charlie, Edith Josie, Bertha Allen, Paul Michael Charlie, Ferris Thomas, Charlie Thomas, Joseph Lazarus Charlie Jr., Sarah Netro, Stephen John Charlie and Hannah Netro. I miss them all and their contributions to our community live on. Our appreciation for their lifelong commitment to being the best of citizens knows no bounds.

Leadership provides a vision and direction for the people by the people. Everyone has their own reasons to seek the confidence of the people in their ridings and lead. Each member of our Assembly understands the impact that being a leader has on Yukoners' lives and they're willing to bear that responsibility time and time again. For that, I thank them.

During my time as the MLA for the Vuntut Gwitchin riding, I have enjoyed some great partnerships and successes to celebrate.

But there have been those who have said that your community's goals can't be done, that your goals will not or should not be realized. When we were faced with that challenge, we stood up together as a community and told those who tried to impede our progress that they do not know the resolve of our community of Old Crow and the Vuntut Gwitchin people. We have seized glory through tough times before because we are rare, strong, resilient and a fun-loving people with a kind and friendly demeanour. We tell them that our vision is one that reflects our traditional values, sustainability principles, and we will strive to create and maintain a healthy, vibrant community that provides a safe, supportive environment in which to live, work and raise our families.

We tell them that we value the empowerment of our community people; that we value all that is living and that we value our children and youth who are the leaders of tomorrow; that we value our traditional language, our culture, spirituality, and the teachings of our elders and that we value accountable and transparent governance. I have watched and learned from past and present leaders of my community as they reaffirm those values and our vision over the years in our territory, around our

country and around the world. I thank all of them for their tireless dedication and years of service.

I am going to take this opportunity to recognize outgoing Chief of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Joe Linklater, and counsellors Esau Schafer, Kenny Tetlich and Roger Kyikavichik.

As the MLA for the Vuntut Gwitchin and their citizens, I take this opportunity to congratulate and thank all of them for their years of tireless dedication, commitment and sacrifice to ensure we live in a sustainable, healthy and vibrant community. To me, your leadership in building our Vuntut Gwitchin government is nothing short of exemplary and monumental in nature, and I thank each and every one of you.

I am proud of how far our community of Old Crow has come since 1994 when we did away with the oppression of the *Indian Act* and accepted the tools of the final and self-government agreements that took us a long, long time to negotiate. Our community's major achievements speak for themselves. As of February 7, 2011, the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge continue to be free of industrial intrusion. We have the Vuntut National Park, which is 4,345 square kilometres that is co-managed with Parks Canada and the North Yukon Renewable Resource Council and is protected for all time. We have the Old Crow Flats Special Management Area that encompasses 19,000 square kilometres and is co-managed with the Yukon territorial government and protects the entire Crow River watershed.

We have Ni'inlii Njik — or Fishing Branch — that has 5,400 square kilometres of wilderness preserve and 1,000 square kilometres of the habitat protection area. Fishing Branch took our community 50 years plus to secure with the guidance of our elders, but our community did it. Our community has 7,750 square kilometres of category A settlement land with ownership of surface and subsurface rights. We have land-based experiential education learning programs being implemented for our children. We have a wonderful work down river from our community at Rampart House. It's such a wonderful place and it's a heritage site.

There's the completion of the *North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan*, which is the first in the Yukon under the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and the *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement*. We still have very strong ties to the land, water and wildlife — especially the caribou. We continue to have a living culture and a living language to call our own.

I am also proud of our Liberal caucus and what we have achieved and advocated for on behalf of Yukoners over the years. Many issues came from Yukoners and we represented them well. The list is long and we are proud of that list. I believe that 100 years from now the decisions we made in this Assembly and at the community level will have made lives of future generations easier, and that's what leadership is to me. As I see our new chief and council at home in Old Crow take over and as we hand them the well-being of our citizens, our community, our land, water and wildlife, I am confident that they will also hand the next set of leaders a package that is better than when they received it, and that's leadership.

To Norma Kassi, Lorraine Netro, Katherine Nukon, Margaret Lord Smith and Brandon Kyikavichik — I was very honoured to speak at your oath of office ceremony and I wish you well in your leadership journey. I am so proud to be led by a group of such strong Gwich'in women of our community. For our community to become healthier and our citizens better educated, better equipped to be strong players in the north Yukon economy and to ensure environmental sustainability, we must continue to work together because when we work together we are opening new doors for progress.

Whenever I find myself feeling doubtful about the path we are building together, what gives me the most hope is the next generation — the young people who will one day be called upon to lead this territory. Many of the youth in my community have challenged me over the last four and a half years to reaffirm our values and our community's commitment to those values. I am challenged to hold them up against the hard realities of today's world and see how we measure up as a community to achieving the vision of our ancestors.

I believe in a territory where hard work is rewarded. If the 2011-12 budget line items are a statement of how serious this government is taking the hard work of my constituents on the specific line item of building an upgraded water well that meets today's standards, then that sentiment does not hold true with this Yukon Party government. I am more than disappointed that a line item to upgrade the Old Crow water well is not included in this year's budget. After five years and billions of dollars, not one shovel of dirt has been moved. Year after year, I have communicated to this government and to the minister responsible that this is our community's number one priority. This is our only source of potable water, yet I see many other communities' water issues being addressed and those communities started at the same time as the community of Old Crow, under the same funding sources. I guess I will leave it there for now. I will have more to say about this; I am presently looking for more information and I will be bringing this up again.

The health and well-being of the Porcupine caribou herd is once again the talk at many dinner tables around our territory lately, but this time the talk is accompanied by happy grins. One hundred and twenty three thousand strong — our community has never lost faith that this day would come. Our elders encouraged us to be vigilant and those elders who have passed on, I know they are happy too. For the Gwich'in, the relationship with the caribou starts in the womb — that's where it starts — and I can't put into words how proud I am of our territory's people for showing the moral and ethical leadership during the last nine years of uncertainty when we could not achieve a population census of the herd. It has made a difference. Let us continue to prove that conservation of the Porcupine caribou herd is held paramount here in our territory by our citizens. What our territory chooses to save and protect is what our territory chooses to tell the world about itself.

We have travelled through uncertain times accompanied by worried thoughts, but the Porcupine caribou herd has shown itself to be resilient, and I am happy. However, this is not a time to let our conservation guard down. We must continue to be mindful that caribou herd populations are crashing all

around us in the north, and we still need to closely manage ourselves. Our resolve and hard work and stewardship as a territory have been put to the test during the last nine years and, in my opinion, we have passed with flying colours. Many Yukoners have led from behind, accepting less and giving more, and I know that many Yukon hunters have exercised their own restraint; there is no doubt in my mind that our collective efforts have made a huge difference. I thank each and every one for that effort.

I also want to make a special mention of the biologists who, year after year after year, have worried on their own to try to get a census of the Porcupine caribou herd, and I know it weighed heavily on their minds, and I wanted to recognize them for their efforts out on the land.

I have said it before and I'll say it again: if the Porcupine caribou herd population crashes, the ecosystem in north Yukon crashes and the Vuntut Gwitchin culture will suffer endlessly through despair and impoverishment. We cannot allow this to happen. We still have unfinished business. We continue to work toward the permanent protection of the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd on the coastal plain within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness. We will achieve that goal one day.

Many Yukoners are proud of the fact that we have such a wonderful resource within the boundaries of our territory and I believe Yukoners want to see leadership on this issue. This is not about politics. It's about a healthy northern ecosystem. It's about cultural preservation and it's about the intrinsic value of knowing that we have a treasure that is alive and well in our territory.

The Porcupine caribou herd is the lifeblood of our community of Old Crow. It's much more than just food to us. Our cultural and spiritual survival depends on the herd. It is a belonging and connection that defies English words. The herd is all we have. If the Porcupine caribou herd population is allowed to crash, it will be the Vuntut Gwitchin and the community of Old Crow who will suffer the most. After all, we're not going anywhere and we will always be residents of this great territory.

Mr. Speaker, if future times dictate that I must help to once again raise the profile of the Porcupine caribou herd issue and challenge those who need to be challenged, then so be it. I will say what needs to be said. Case in point: on January 29, 2011, Sarah Palin, former Governor of Alaska and potential presidential candidate of the United States of America, said to a closed-door audience at the Safari Club convention in Reno, Nevada, that the Arctic refuge is a barren, desolate, less-than-pristine place, ideal for oil drilling, and pooh-poohed Green's warning about the big Porcupine caribou herd: "If a caribou needs to be sacrificed for the sake of energy independence, I say, 'Mr. Caribou, you need to take one for the team.'"

Mr. Speaker, this is an example of the ignorant star power that the Vuntut Gwitchin have had to deal with over the years. For Mrs. Palin to utter such words — someone who has lived in Alaska her entire life — is simply idiotic and false and I will leave it at that.

I will end this topic by saying that it is my dire hope that one day the outdated *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* goes through a thorough review and revision by the parties and that one day it be replaced with a Porcupine caribou conservation agreement.

We have a saying in Gwich'in — "Vadzaih yeendoo gwee-heendaii geenjit." It translates to "Caribou, in the future, they are going to live." Long live the Porcupine caribou herd, Mr. Speaker.

When we speak of climate change, the next generation must be a large component of our scope of thought. We must be cognizant of their needs in order to avoid social despair and the feeling that there is no hope, in order to avoid a social catastrophe. I've said this before and I will keep saying it — our Mother Earth is trying to cleanse herself of the damage humans have caused. That is why we are witnessing a fury of catastrophic weather events around the globe that have not been recorded by human history before. If we can find a way for the fight against climate change to be profitable, then we are halfway there. Every molecule of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere by human activities matters. Let history show that we made decisions and acted in unison as a people, as residents on this Earth so the impoverishment of humankind did not become a reality.

I believe it's important for all of us to now look at jurisdictions around the world and their records of action rather than be deceived or confused by their words. It may take millions of citizens protesting in the streets and towns and cities around the world and acts of civil disobedience for the politicians to actually listen and do something about climate change. We must exemplify to the future generations that our relationship with the land, the water and the wildlife is that important to us and that our significant commitments of time, efforts and money is reflective of our caring and belonging, especially here in the north, our home. In the words of Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations, "Nature will not wait while we negotiate, and after years of negotiating, we have not risen to the challenge and cut our greenhouse gas emissions. The window to avoid runaway climate change is closing." He said those words on December 7, 2010, in Cancun, Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I endorse that statement from Ban Ki-moon wholeheartedly.

Over the last four and one-half years there have been many shining examples of how we can work together for our Yukon citizens in this Assembly, yet there were times when we were faced with combative, rigid political ideologies and there was virtually no way to compromise. I believe we all want to move in the same general direction of progress toward a better future for our children and grandchildren, always with the belief that there are better days ahead. I will never shirk or stand down from my unwavering stance to my roles and responsibilities as a parliamentarian and as part of the Liberal caucus. I believe that Yukoners are hungry for change, and very soon we will be asking Yukoners to rally around our Liberal team — to rally around a team that looks ahead and not behind, a team who welcomes new ideas without rigid reactions, a team that is fair, balanced and bold.

We need to get the compassion, cooperation and competency that Yukoners rightly deserve back into their government and rebuild public trust. I personally want to lead by reaching out, by negotiating to bridge the divides and to solve the problems at hand. I want to listen and lead our territory toward a more collaborative and inclusive way of doing business. Our Liberal team wants to be responsive, yet responsible to Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, leadership is also knowing when and how to abandon a failed idea and it is more often than not the most difficult decision a leader can make. I have seen times during the last four years how some bad ideas should have been abandoned and they weren't, and Yukon taxpayers paid a price. The majority of us in this House tend to forget that 60 percent of Yukoners were not happy with what happened in the 2006 election, but that's our system.

As the MLA for the Vuntut Gwitchin riding, it is my job to ensure that their public government not only hears, but understands their issues and concerns. I will continue to defend or advocate for what my constituents believe to be the right thing to do, even if it means capturing the essence of a Napoleon Hill quote, where he said, "Thomas Edison dreamed of a lamp that could be operated by electricity, began where he stood to put his dream into action and despite more than 10,000 failures, he stood by that dream until he made it a physical reality. Practical dreamers do not quit!"

I want our future generations to look back 100 years from now and view our decisions as visionary and some decisions as downright brilliant. I want them to be proud of the way we challenge processes, inspired a shared vision among our citizens, how we empowered our citizens to act and, most importantly, the way we encourage the heart, so that when the world looks to our Yukon, they see strength in the fabric of our society; they see partnerships; they see cooperative governance and they see a powerhouse of a people.

They see a place that celebrates the strength of our economy, the creativity of our artists, the way we care for our least fortunate; the majesty of our wilderness and landscapes; the resolve of our rural communities and the true wealth of our territory: our families. Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant with the weak and the wrong because at some time in your life you will have been all of these. Goddard said those words. The best is yet to come for our Yukon.

Thank you and mahsi' cho.

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** It is an honour and privilege to rise today to speak about the 2011-12 budget, as tabled by our leader, Premier Fentie. The environment is important to all Yukoners, so I will give all Yukoners a picture, or a snapshot, of what our government has accomplished over the past nine years.

First, I would like to thank our Premier, the Minister of Finance, for tabling a billion-dollar budget for the third year in a row.

Since the Yukon Party government began leading Yukon back in 2002, our government has led Yukon to becoming an

economic powerhouse. This is the Yukon Party's ninth budget and it is again a surplus budget. A balanced budget is the pathway to prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party government has produced a billion dollar budget plus under this Premier. This is quite a phenomenal amount of money for a population of 34,000 citizens. Why would anyone want change? I know of no other jurisdiction in Canada that has such a large amount of money to support such a small population. I believe in giving credit where credit is due and the Premier is due credit for his strong leadership.

I would like to thank my constituents of McIntyre-Takhini for all of their support. Over the last nine years, our riding has experienced many positive changes as the result of this government's planning and work. We have the new Hamilton Boulevard extension, the establishment of a pilot project in the land-based healing program at Jackson Lake administered by Kwanlin Dun First Nation, and the new Kwanlin Dun cultural centre at the Whitehorse waterfront, to name a few. These are very significant gains.

Our territory is experiencing a gold rush and the mining industry is booming. I think that this success is a result, in part, of the working relationships we have built together with self-governing First Nations, and it has certainly grown out of land claim agreements and land use planning to encourage private sector investment. The year 2010 set a record for mining exploration expenditures. Over \$140 million was invested. Back in 2002, our unemployment rate was in the double digits. December 2010's unemployment rate for our territory was at a national low of 4.4 percent.

Balance — the Yukon Party government budget is about balance. Our government balances economic growth while protecting our environment. As Minister of Environment, I am very proud of the hard work and dedication of the staff of Environment Yukon. I extend a well-earned thank you to all of the employees of Environment Yukon.

Since the Yukon Party has been in office, our government has added a large number of protected areas. These include the Tombstone Territorial Park established in 2004; Old Crow Flats east and west special management area established in 2006; the Lhutsaw Wetland Habitat Protection Area established in 2007; Fishing Branch Wilderness Preserve established in 2003; Nordenskiöld Wetland habitat protection plan established in 2010; Asi Keyi Natural Environment Park identified in 2003; Fishing Branch Ecological Reserve established in 2003; the Kusawa Natural Environmental park identified in 2005; the Pickhandle Lake Habitat Protection Area identified in 2003; Tagish River Habitat Protection Area identified in 2005; Agay Mene Natural Environment Park identified in 2005; and the Lewes Marsh Habitat Protection Area identified in 2005.

Identifying natural areas is important because they are necessary to fulfill obligations to First Nations in final agreements, protect the natural area of traditional and cultural significance, is of major cultural and economic importance, and it encourages public awareness and appreciation.

For the newest protected area, the Nordenskiöld Wetland Habitat Protection Area — I participated in the formal signing

ceremony on October 29 in Carmacks. The Nordenskiöld Wetland is the breadbasket for the Little Salmon Carmacks people. Swans, ducks, geese, berries, fish and game can be found in this rich habitat. The Nordenskiöld Wetland Habitat Protection Area is now the fourth HPA to be designated in Yukon. Together Nordenskiöld, Old Crow Flats, the Lhutsaw Wetland and the Horseshoe Slough habitat protection areas protect almost 490,000 hectares of habitat. Work continues with First Nations on establishing five more habitat protection areas. The Ddhaw Ghro, covering the area formerly known as McArthur Wildlife Sanctuary, Devil's Elbow, Big Island along the Stewart River and important waterfall staging area at Pickhandle Lake, Lewes Marsh and Tagish Narrows.

Environment Yukon is also working with First Nations on three new territorial parks called for in their final agreements: the Agay Mene which is south of Jakes Corner and encompasses Tarfu Lake, the Asi Keyi, which incorporates much of the former Kluane Wildlife Sanctuary, and Kusawa near Whitehorse. Through national and territorial parks, ecological preserves, habitat protection areas, wilderness preserves and national wildlife areas, approximately 12 percent of the Yukon's land mass is protected — about 61,000 square kilometres.

In August of 2009 we opened the Tombstone Park Interpretive Centre. The investment of \$2 million resulted in this world-class facility being built to green standards. It has brought 10 percent additional visitors to the park and 15 percent more visitors to Tombstone campground in 2010. The centre offers displays on the cultural and natural history of the park and highway. Cooperation with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in has enhanced operation of the park and interpretive centre. We have completed over \$600,000 in new interpretive trails, parking lot and site restoration projects around the new Tombstone Interpretive Centre.

We received good news regarding the census of the Porcupine Caribou herd. The estimated size of the herd is over 123,000 animals. This is a relief, as we were expecting a lower count. We should be receiving the final count in a few weeks' time from the State of Alaska. The herd's population fell by 55,000 animals between the years 1989 and 2000 — 178,000 to 123,000 individuals. At more than 123,000 animals, the management plan says the licensed hunter may be permitted to take two bull caribou and subsistence hunters are not limited. However, I would like to put on record that this does not mean that this should be open season on the herd. There still has to be respect for the herd in order to maintain and keep that large number sustained — or keep that large number where it's at. The *Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement* is a management framework that varies harvesting practices with the size of the herd population.

The plan applies to all hunters — aboriginal and residents — and establishes a mandatory reporting and bulls-only regime. The plan agreed to by eight parties — the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Tribal Council, Vuntut Gwitchin government; Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation; the Inuvialuit Game Council; Government of Yukon; Government of Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada.

We also embarked on the wolf management plan review, which is now underway. Environment Yukon is partnering with the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to find out what values and ecological conditions have changed since the plan was released in 1992. The wolf conservation and management plan review will include public meetings and meetings with renewable resources councils and First Nations. A dedicated website will be available for sharing reports, research and other information about wolves and wolf management, as well as the original plan.

The six-person review committee will coordinate the review and evaluate the 40 recommendations of the original management plan, taking into consideration the comments received and current research. It is anticipated that final recommendations on revisions to the plan will be ready by July of 2011.

The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board is recognized within land claims final agreements as the primary instrument of fish and wildlife management in Yukon, with a mandate to make recommendations on wolf management. Yukon has a healthy wolf population of 4,000 to maybe 4,500 animals. About 130 wolves are harvested annually through trapping or hunting.

I'll go into some site assessments and remediation unit, known as SARU, which was established in 2008 by our government. The mandate of SARU was to identify, assess and remediate Yukon government contaminated sites. Some contaminated Government of Yukon sites have been remediated as a result of managing environmental liabilities. Our government has budgeted over \$2.2 million for remediating four contaminated sites on Yukon government land.

The major undertaking this year is for the north Klondike River highway maintenance camp at Km. 65.1 of the Dempster Highway. The Marwell tar pit remediation project is estimated to cost \$6.8 million. Canada will fund \$4.76 million and the remaining 30 percent of the cost will be funded primarily through the territorial northern strategy trust fund.

The project is expected to be completed in 2020 or 2021. Activities for 2011 will include planning additional assessment, YESA screening and permitting. The project will be carried out in three phases. During phase 1, preliminary activities will occur. The site will be assessed and remediation options will be considered. A remediation plan will be developed; costs will be determined; consultation will continue with the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council and the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. Discussions will be held with residents of the area and other stakeholders.

An environmental assessment of the plan will be done according to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* and permitting and licensing activities will be identified. This phase may take up to five years.

Phase 2, the remediation phase, will include engineering and remediation work and is expected to take two years. Activities include the removal, on-site treatment, risk management and stabilization of the contaminants. At the end of this phase, the Government of Yukon will provide Canada with a profes-

sional engineering certificate verifying that the remediation plan has been fully implemented.

Phase 3, the post-remediation phase, will include the post-remediation monitoring and is expected to last four years. Activities include groundwater monitoring, revegetation and a regulatory review. Upon the completion of this phase, the Government of Yukon will issue a compliance certificate, as required under the Yukon *Environment Act*. The funding agreement for the remediation calls on Canada and Yukon to work with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dun First Nation on employment and procurement opportunities for their citizens.

In 2009 the Yukon government established the office of chief veterinarian to implement the Yukon animal health program. This program provides advice and direction to policy, regulation and surveillance impacting wildlife, domestic animals and public health. The increased capacity of the program means an improved and a more coordinated response to issues related to animal health and protection.

Climate change is a topic that is ever present in the news and on Yukoners' minds. The Government of Yukon has made progress in addressing Yukoners' concerns. Climate change is a change in the average weather that a given region experiences. Climate change on a global scale includes changes to temperatures, shifts in wind patterns and changes to precipitation.

Between 1950 and 2000, winter temperatures in Yukon have increased by as much as three to four degrees Celsius. Yukon is experiencing greater precipitation during winter and more severe storms year-round.

The influences of symptoms of climate change are, in part, responsible for some of the negative impacts that Yukon is experiencing. Some of these impacts are road damage due to melting permafrost, animal population changes, migration changes, floods and record forest fires.

What is the Government of Yukon doing to reduce the impact on the environment? Well, it developed the *Climate Change Action Plan*, released in February of 2009. It commits the Government of Yukon to reduce government greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2015 and to become carbon neutral by 2020.

All 33 actions set out in the action plan are currently underway. Yukon Housing Corporation is building over 120 new housing units built to SuperGreen standards, thus reducing energy use and release of greenhouse gases while addressing the housing needs of Yukoners. All government-funded construction is to show leadership in energy and environmental design-certified.

The *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan* enhances recycling, waste reduction and diversion programs; Yukon Housing Corporation and the Energy Solutions Centre offer programs to help homeowners to become more energy efficient.

Our territory is now over 90 percent powered by clean, renewable energy. There was the development of the energy strategy for Yukon in January 2009, a long-term vision for the responsible development of energy resources. The Yukon government supports the northern climate exchange for public edu-

cation and outreach, providing climate change information as part of the Northern Research Institute of Yukon College.

What is the Yukon government doing about changing permafrost? The Yukon Geological Survey is studying how permafrost and landslides affect Yukon. This information helps to predict how climate change will affect infrastructure, such as highways and pipelines. The permafrost outreach program is a partnership of the University of Alaska and Yukon government to install long-term permafrost monitoring systems near schools, to allow students to study permafrost changes and support research on permafrost changes.

The Yukon government is also testing new materials and building techniques to build more frost heave-resilient highways. What is the Yukon government doing about changing flora and fauna? Bio-inventory work is being done for wildlife to collect information that helps to maintain resources in a balanced and substantive way. Research on species, numbers, distributions and behaviours help to make informed wildlife management decisions and enables monitoring the impact of climate change.

The University of Northern British Columbia is currently conducting research on assessing the vulnerability to climate change and adaptive capacity of Yukon forest tree species and ecosystems. This is a three-year project that was initiated in 2008. Climate change adaptation research is being developed along the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations territory by the University of British Columbia and the model for a special project area program.

The Government of Yukon is supporting UBC researchers who are leading a series of focus group discussions on climate change in the Champagne and Aishihik traditional territory. The aim of this part of the project is to gather viewpoints of resource management practitioners on alternative forest renewable strategies and if they may be undertaken in light of climate change to achieve the objectives of the plan.

#### **Motion to adjourn debate**

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** Seeing the time, Mr. Speaker, I move that debate be now adjourned.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Environment that debate be now adjourned.

*Motion to adjourn debate on second reading of Bill No. 24 agreed to*

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I move that the House do now adjourn.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

*Motion agreed to*

**Speaker:** This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.*